A HISTORY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY VOLUME I:

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL



NORMAN L. GEISLER

A History of Western Philosophy, Volume I:

Ancient and Medieval

By Norman L. Geisler

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Cover Photo: Raphael's *The School of Athens*. Plato (pointing upwards to another world) and Aristotle (pointing to this world) generated the two greatest streams of philosophy in the West. Raphael, followed the conventions of Byzantine art, used the color red in Plato's cloak to symbolize his other-worldly outlook and blue in Aristotle's cloak to symbolize his this-worldly outlook.

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The term philosophy originally meant the love of wisdom. Eventually, it became the name given to the inquiry into the first principles and causes of things from the standpoint of human reason. Therefore, there are many reasons for studying philosophy—it is the history of thought.

First of all, one can see farther when standing on the shoulders of giants. The great philosophers of antiquity are truly the intellectual giants bridging the abyss between the past and the present. Unfortunately, the thoughts of the earlier thinkers were often conflicting and occasionally incorrect. Nevertheless, we can often learn from the errors of these great minds. There is a lot of truth to be learned from a significant error.

What is more, great minds produce great thoughts, and great thoughts are worth thinking again. Our mind is enriched by following in the intellectual footsteps of those that have gone before us.

Philosophy provides a basis of thought in virtually every other discipline. For example, one cannot truly know science without understanding the philosophy of science. Nor can one know theology without understanding the philosophical principles that it is built upon.

Your worldview is a philosophical construct. Because you view everything in the world through the lens of your worldview, you must thoroughly examine and completely understand the philosophical principles that frame this lens. Therefore, that *with which* we think, our worldview, is more important than that *about which* we think, our world; the former determines our comprehension of the latter. Philosophy is the basis upon which we build our thoughts about life.

The basic areas of philosophy—logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics—unfold before us in the history of thought. Hence, an understanding of the history of philosophy brings with it an understanding of the diverse areas of philosophical thought. With the

crucial knowledge of what the great minds before us have thought concerning the critical topics of life, we can better develop our own ideas about our world.

From a religious point of view, all theological, biblical, and hermeneutical issues are rooted in philosophy and its presuppositions. Without a knowledge of the history of philosophy, we cannot properly understand and resolve these issues.

Finally, the study of the history of thought is a worthy and rewarding enterprise all within itself. As Aristotle said, humans are rational animals. As such, we are capable of rational thought. On the other hand, ideas, important or petty, good or bad, have consequences. One need think only of men like Hitler, Stalin, and Mao to confirm the effect of a single man's ideas.

In view of all these reasons, you, the reader, could not spend your intellectual efforts more profitably than in the study of the unfolding of the history of great ideas. We do not live in a vacuum, thus, we must not think in a vacuum. With the preparation of the thoughts of those that have gone before us, we can influence the thoughts of those that come after us. Welcome to the history of philosophy. Enter, and experience the power of thought at your fingertips.

THE FOUR GREAT PERIODS OF WESTERN THOUGHT

Ancient Philosophy

(C. 600 B.C. – C. A.D. 400)

The dominant religious view among ancient western philosophers was polytheism (many gods). At the same time, the chief philosophical consideration was cosmogony, the study of the origin and nature of the cosmos.

Medieval Philosophy

(C. A.D. 400 – C. 1500)

During the Middle Ages, the primary religious view was Theism (the belief in one supreme God and Creator of the universe). This included Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thinkers. Their chief concern in the philosophical arena was metaphysics (the study of being or reality). So, the dominant philosophical consideration was Metaphysics.

Modern Philosophy

(C. A.D. 1500 – C. 1900)

As we move into the modern world, agnosticism emerged at the center of concern. And the philosophical emphasis was in the realm of epistemology (the study of how we know).

Contemporary Philosophy

(20th Century On)

As the twentieth century dawned, different philosophical methodologies shifted the flow of philosophy from agnosticism to various forms of atheism.

THE ORIGIN OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

THE PRE-SOCRATICS

The philosophers that predated Socrates were mainly concerned with the realm of cosmogony and cosmology. Cosmogony is theory about the origin of the cosmos. Cosmology pertains more to the structure, nature, and operation of the cosmos. Each of the pre-Socratics had a distinctive approach at looking at the world. Those approaches may be generalized as follows:

Natural – Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes promoted a natural (rather than religious) approach to explaining the world.

Theological – Xenophanes .

Mathematical-Mystical – Pythagoras ("The number 10 is perfect.")

Moral – Heraclitus ("No one steps into the same river twice.")

Metaphysical – Parmenides (Monism).

Dialectical – Zeno and Melissus (Reducing to absurdity).

Pluralistic – Empedocles and Anaxagoras.

Atomistic – Leucippus and Democritus (Reducible to a non-splitable entity).

Rhetorical—The Sophist: Protagoras, Thrasymachus, arguers.

Dialogical – Socrates, asking probing questions of students.

Brief Comments on Pre-Socratic Philosophy

First of all, the pre-Socratics were largely polytheistic in their religious views, with some being henotheistic (believing in one chief god among many other gods). On the philosophical front, their concern was with cosmogony, the origin and nature of the cosmos. As Etienne Gilson (c. A.D. 1884 – 1987) noted (in *God and Philosophy*), they never got their metaphysical first principle and their object of devotion together. This was left for later Medieval thinkers to discover.

The records of tradition have implied that Thales of Miletus was the first philosopher. However, examining the writings of his predecessors illustrates that the view held regarding man and his world was not vastly different from the views held by these early philosophers. Looking back with what is now considered philosophy it can be seen that Greek philosophy arose out of myth, religion, or poetry. But some of the Greeks themselves spoke of the oppositions between philosophy itself and myth and poetry, though there seemed to be some tie between them. Some believe that they were attempting to make a naturalistic logos (thought) about the religious mythos (myth) they inherited.

Xenophanes and Plato divide the lines between poetry and philosophy. They state that the sayings of the poets reduces to the *way* the gods are treated, whereas the philosophers speak more accurately *about* the gods, indicating that theology and philosophy are somehow connected. Thus, early philosophy attempted to correct public opinion's abuses of religion to then make correct statements about the gods.

When Aristotle is considered, the opposition between philosophy and myth sharpens but there is still an indication that there is a tie between them. He suggests the "language of proof" or propositionally, not mythically, as the criteria for judgment, and this is where the poet, specifically Plato, is found guilty. Yet Aristotle does argue that myth and philosophy do at times have things in common (*Metaphysics*).

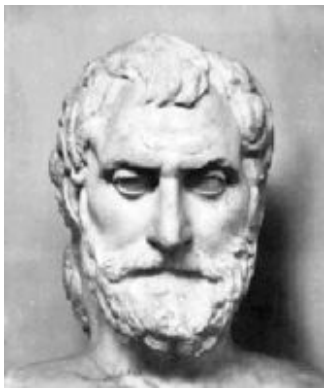
It was the *theological* poets that gave rise to the criticisms of philosophers. The poetic works of Homer (*Iliad*) and Hesiod (*Theogony*) best

illustrate the mythological perspective of the gods. Homer's work illustrates the world coming into being spoken of in terms of the first race of the gods and how these generations continued, even to the consideration of a hierarchy where Zeus was supreme over all other gods. But Hesiod's *Theogony* points out the difference between the first race of the gods with the anthropomorphic gods found in the *Iliad*. It is a shifting of divinity away from these gods and showing that they too are capable of falsehoods, like the mere mortals.

In his book *God and Philosophy* Etienne Gilson states that "[i]n the history of Western culture, every chapter begins with the Greeks. This is true of logic, of science, of art, of politics, and is equally true of natural theology; but it is not at once clear where one should look, in the past of ancient Greece, for the origins of our philosophical notion of God" [Gilson, *GAP*, p. 1]. When those like Thales and the soon to follow after philosophers considered the first principle of all things, of which they identified as "divine" or "gods," they did not think of these as "possible objects of worship" but rather perhaps the idea of "god" had been introduced to them through the writings of Homer and Hesiod.

By the time philosophy grew to the era of Plato's "Idea of Good" where *to be* meant to be immaterial, immutable, necessary, and intelligible, this "Idea of Good" dominated the world. And it is here where Gilson states that "assuredly, nothing more closely resembles the definition of the Christian God that this definition of the Good ["the universal author of all things beautiful and right . . . (ref. Plato, *Republic*)]" [Ibid., p. 25]. Aristotle takes Plato's "Idea of Good" one step further and attributes to the Idea the characteristic of it being the prime mover of the universe. This prime mover was also the supreme god, thus moving past the idea of the Greek gods ultimately having the divinity lost. This Aristotelian being was an eternally necessary Being. Gilson elaborates and now poses a predicament: "The problem for us is therefore not to know how it has come into being but to understand what happens in it and consequently what it is" [Ibid., p. 33]. At the peak of Aristotle's universe is not Plato's "Idea" but rather an eternal self-subsisting, divine self-thinking "Thought." According to Gilson when Greek philosophy ended, what was needed was a progress in natural theology towards metaphysics, "but curiously enough [he says], metaphysics was to make it under the influence of religion" [Ibid., p. 37].

THALES (C. 640 - 546/5 B.C.)



It remains a mystery as to why western philosophy began in Greece. Many factors no doubt contributed to it including the nature of the Greek language, the genius of the Greek mind, the location of Greece as the center of commerce and culture. Seeking unity in all the diversity this commerce brought may have contributed to it. Whatever the factors, Western philosophy of nature began with the prediction of an eclipse by Thales in 585 B.C. What is known about Thales primarily comes from Aristotle, who received the information via reports and not through documents created by Thales himself.

Background Information

Thales was born around 639/640 B.C. and died about 546/565 B.C. According to Herodotus, he is said to have accurately predicted a solar eclipse that occurred on May 28, 585 B.C. (during a battle between the Lydeans and the Persians). Interestingly, this is about the same time the Jewish temple of Southern kingdom (Judah) was destroyed and the final group of Jews was exiled to Babylon.

Thales lived in Miletus in the Greek colony of Ionia. Ionia at that time was the philosophical hot-bed of the ancient world. His views were a mixture of philosophy and great concern for political conditions and developments in Asia Minor. Thales, known for his great practical wisdom, is also known for his many contributions to the areas of science, astronomy, engineering, mathematics, and geometry. He died shortly before the fall of Sardis (c. 546/545 B.C.) to Persia. He is considered the founder of Western philosophy a designation given to him by Aristotle. He also ultimately was

the founder of the Greek culture, which, in the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great, gave the world a common trade language and prepared the way for Christianity. Indeed, the Greek translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek (known as the Septuagint or LXX) was the Bible of the New Testament Church. And the books and letters of the New Testament were also written in this "common" Greek.

Among his many talents, Thales constructed an almanac and introduced the Phoenician practice of steering a ship's course by the "Little Bear" in the stars. In short, he sought to find the natural explanation of things.

His Philosophy

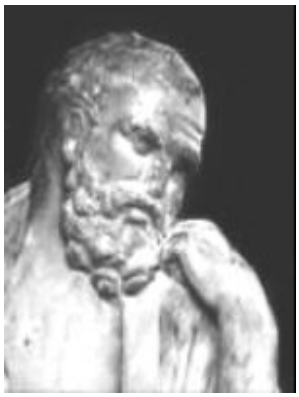
Thales sought the answer to the question "what is the ultimate nature of the world?" From observation, he concluded the earth is flat and that was like a disk floating on water since whatever direction one goes he eventually is encircled by water. Not only was Thales considering that the expanse around him floated on water, but as Aristotle records of him, he presupposed that everything in the universe is ultimately derived from water. Thus, and according to Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*, the three doctrines attributed to Thales are: Water is the nature of all things, all things have soul in them, the all is divine, i.e., full of gods (Aristotle's *De Anima*). According to Thales, water is the principle (*arche*) of all things and that the earth floats on water. But to call water in Aristotle's sense of *principle* "that from which a thing comes and which remains within it" is most likely to go beyond what Thales meant. Perhaps what Thales meant was that water is somehow involved in the origin of things. For Thales, water was both animated and divine and in this way was able to function as the first principle of all things. (It must be noted that water being the origin of all things was fairly common in the mythological traditions of the Greeks. Aristotle seems to think that Thales must have presented this doctrine in some way that allowed it to become a basis for future serious philosophical inquiry.) Thus, he concluded that all "things" are varying forms of one primary and ultimate element water. There are three states of water: liquid, solid, and mist (gas). It is noteworthy to add that two thirds to three quarters of the world is water.

Thalestheological perspective states that the soul pervades the universe and that all things are alive. This view is said to be suggested by the magnet or better stated, the observation of the magnet, having the power to

move and become “active”only when rubbed. This led Thales to consider that things are “alive.” There is a force or power which pervades all things and from which take their origin water.

With no attempt to reconcile them, he is said to have believed that the world is full of gods and *daemons* (his religious view was polytheism) and yet he also held to naturalism (as his philosophical view). Pondering all of the nuances of Thales’doctrines simultaneously water (nature), soul (life), god (divinity) we have something that cannot be ignored when it comes to the appraisal of Thales as the first philosopher, even though there is mystical elements here as well. He was the first to speak of the notion of unity in difference (the problem of the one and the many) that most of his successors struggled with down through the years.

ANAXIMANDER (C. 610 - 546 B.C.)



Background Information

Anaximander was born in Miletus, the most powerful and richest Greek city in Asia Minor, in 610 B.C. and died in 546 B.C . He would have been in twenties when the great eclipse prediction was made by Thales in 585 B.C. According to tradition, Anaximander was the "pupil and successor of Thales." Anaximander continued the type of natural investigation inaugurated by his predecessor and teacher Thales. He was the first known Greek who dared produce a written treatise on nature. He was both a philosopher and natural scientist and has been accredited with the following achievements: creating first Greek world map, Greek celestial globe, and the adaptation of the gnomon (the vertical pointer of a sundial). Pliny traced the sun's annual path in the ecliptic. In the center of his spherical model of the heavens was the Earth—which was modeled after a cylinder or disk whose height was one-third its diameter. The earth then remained at rest because of its equal distance from all other points of the celestial circumference, having no reason to move from its stationary position. This symmetry conclusion of Anaximander contrasted not only from the mythic views but also with the teachings of Thales: the earth floats on water. It is here that Anaximander astronomical approach is based on a mathematical foundation that would later be developed by the Pythagoreans, Exodoxus, and Aristarchus. He is also credited with constructing a map of the Black Sea. He composed a prose work on his philosophical theories, but only fragments of it survived.

His Philosophy

Anaximander's book, later titled *On The Nature of Things*, records his position in regards to the function of the natural world and thus how it reached its present form. The natural worlds began from a first principle called the Boundless or Infinite (*to apeiron*). Anaximander's finding as the "first principle" was something he calls the "unlimited," instead of water as in Thales. Anaximander further describes the "unlimited" as "eternal and ageless," (*Fr*. 2) "deathless and indestructible," (*Fr*. 3) and something that "encompasses all and steers all." This unlimited can never become exhausted and is never diminished by the things that proceed from it. He describes it how "something capable of generating Hot and Cold was separated off . . . and a sphere of fire from this source grew around the air in the region of the earth like bark around a tree. When this sphere was torn off and enclosed in certain rings, the sun and the moon and the stars came into existence" (Diels-Kranz). The land, sea, air, and heavens are explained by a continual process of separating off from the primeval pair of Hot (dry) and Cold (wet). Whether related phenomenon (rain, wind, lightning, etc.) is explained as the interaction of these elemental principles (water, air, fire) and opposite powers (hot and cold, dry and moist, thick and thin, light and dark). Regarding the origin of living things, he explained it as part of the same process. Anaximander commented that the first human beings could never have survived as infants but instead must have been born "from living things of another kind, since other animals are quickly able to look for their own food, while only man requires prolonged nursing" (Diels-Kranz).

Anaximander viewed cosmic justice as "[o]ut of those things whence is the generation of existing things, into them also does their destruction take place, as is right and due; for they make retribution and pay the penalty to one another for their offence, according to the ordering of time. The world is looked upon as being governed by a law analogous to human justice; a proportion is realized sooner or later. The changes that are evident in the world around us are attributed to a governed law similar to the courts and attributed to the divine which steers all things.

It is Anaximander's doctrine of Boundless or Infinite as the *aperion* the starting point and origin of the cosmic process. This "Infinite" or *arche* though did not mean a mathematical infinite as is now commonly known but rather it meant according to Anaximander as "untraversable," "limitless," or "ageless and immortal," and even probably meaning "the divine" (*to theion*). This *aperion* encircles and holds onto all things and

governs all things as well. It seems to have been unregenerated and is imperishable in addition to being a boundless source of inexhaustible materials, have eternal motive powers, and contain vital energy. This *aperion* is both physical and metaphysical or theological concept. It seems to point to the void left by the atomists and to the deity of Xenophanes, Aristotle, and the Stoics.

In brief, Anaximander said that the primary and ultimate element of all things is *apeiron,* a substance and principle of infinite extent and indefinite character; it is eternal. He coined the phrase "material cause" for this primary element (out of which all is made). He was the first complete naturalist, denying any role to the gods. He attempted to answer *how* the world developed (cosmology), not how it originated ultimately (cosmogony). He believed there was a plurality of innumerable co-existent worlds that come into being through eternal motion. The earth is not a disk but a short cylinder, which does not move. He presented the first theory of evolution, saying man originated from animal species.

ANAXIMENES (C. 640 - 546 B.C.)



Background Information

Anaximenes was a contemporary of Anaximander. He was born about 640 and died about 528/526 B.C. He lived in Miletus, Ionia. This was a philosophical hotbed of the ancient world. He was the third and last philosopher in the Milesian school, also a materialist (i.e., atheist). His major works only survive from small fragments. Based upon ancient testimony, historians after Aristotle regard Anaximene's teaching as a contribution to the Milesian debates on Nature. This was assumed to be a continuation of thought originating from Thales and Anaximander addressing the unique problem of the day: the birth and structure of the physical world.

His Philosophy

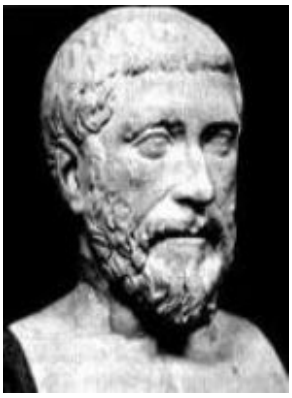
He assumed, as did his two predecessors, Thales and Anaximander, that one could know things as they really are (i.e. realism). He said the primary and ultimate element of the universe is air (as contrasted to Anaximander's principle of water), encompassing all and holding it together. Air is infinitely vast in scope and perfectly fixed by rule. This air is invisible atmospheric air and is only visible through the Hot and Cold, and Damp and motion. It is from this air that all things exist and have existed and will come into existence. This also applies to gods (polytheism), divine things, and the rest of the world coming out of a birthing from air. It is said that Anaximenes made "gods and divine things" come from air. Thus, according to Anaximenes, this air is continually in motion and causes all physical states,

where the Hot and Cold are dominate states of physical activity. Air is in everything. The divine nature of air governs thought and therefore all things.

The earth according to Anaximenes, is table like: round, broad, flat, and shallow, riding on air and hovering like a suspended kite. The earth exhausts moisture and creates heavenly bodies described as fires in the sky. The heavens are similar to a cap on the top of a head that can be turned around on one's head, where consequently, heavenly bodies would not pass under the earth.

But how does Anaximenes determine a natural law coinciding with his cosmology? Our souls, being air, hold us together the same as the Cosmic air holds the world together by encapsulating it. Anaximenes understands *soul* not merely in the sense of *life* but as something of a considerably more definite nature. The world seemed to include regularity that was reliable and intelligent, organically self-regulating and autonomous. He also stated that law-like regularities were not conceivable without the consideration of the idea of a cause. This divine air regulated the earth by encasing it.

PYTHAGORAS (C. 6TH CENT. B.C.)



Background

Little is known about Pythagoras therefore most of the information is about the Pythagoreans. Pythagoras lived during the second half of the sixth century B.C. His most famous contribution is to modern geometry; we received the Pythagorean Theorem (the square the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of its other two sides) from him.

The Pythagoreans, the religious group formed by Pythagoras, were renowned for their secrecy and became the focus of speculation. The information that is available, was from Aristotle, and is about this school. Xenophanes also wrote about Pythagoras. It is estimated that Pythagoras was a contemporary of Anaximenes. He was a Greek of the same Ionian culture as the Miletus philosophers and learning mathematics, more so for its own sake and not just in association with commerce, from Egypt and Persia. It is there that he experienced the influence of mystic lore. Pythagoras was born on the island of Samos, later immigrating to Crotona in southern Italy. He was probably at his prime around 570 B.C. There he founded a society with religious, political, and philosophical aims which gained power in the city. This society that was primarily religious in character and purpose, cultivated learning and engaged in political activity. Both men and women were allowed to join. The group was divided into “initiates” and “learners.” There were strict rules of abstinence and silence.

After a revolt against his society, he retired to Metapontum. There exists no Pythagorean literature before Plato and it is claimed that little has

been written. Information from the Christian era is said to be abundant, but instead, suspect. According to Aristotle, the Pythagorean schools, which had later dispersed, inevitably led to divergences of teachings in the various groups. He makes it clear that by the late fifth century some Pythagoreans were teaching one thing while others were teaching another. In part, the division was caused by the teaching of religion and science being brought under one worldview, which was beyond the scope of "lesser men."

The Pythagoreans saw a mystical significance to numbers providing a key to the divine *kosmos*. The Pythagoreans brought to fore the possibility and necessity of providing a quantitative explanation of the cosmos such that those coming after them could not ignore this. Ten was the sacred number according to the Pythagoreans.

His Philosophy

For Pythagoras, philosophy was a basis of life that leads the soul to salvation. At the center of philosophy is where man and finds his relation to other forms of life, including the cosmos. Philosophy according to Pythagoras is the pursuit of truth and that no man, but only God, is properly said to be wise. He founded an ascetic religious society, centered around the idea of purity and purification, self-examination, abstention from flesh and beans, and the observance of other primitive taboos. This group recognized Apollo, the Greek guardian god of moderation. It was believed that Pythagoras was to be an incarnation of Apollo. In addition, behind the superstition and science, the unity of life made possible the belief in the transmigration (where the soul survives after the dissolution of the body and continues to live a personal life) of the soul along with a standard of prohibiting the consumption of meat: a sheep may house the soul of an ancestor. According to Aristotle and Plato, this transmigration doctrine seemed to have a cultic background rather than stemming from a philosophical basis. This secret society formed rules for the good of its members with a view of the survival of the soul, which involved either reward or punishment for the deeds one had done in this life. Since the cosmos was one, eternal, divine, breathing creature, and man's soul was part of this, man was to cultivate purity of the soul so that it would be prepared to return to the universal soul. Man's immortal soul was imprisoned in a mortal body. Since the soul was in the contaminated body, it must tread the wheel of reincarnation to later enter a new body of a man or animal. (These same beliefs were taught by the religious movement known as Orphism.)

As medicine purges the body, so does music purge the soul, and music is number, and number is the nature of all things. According to Aristotle, as the Ionians thought all things were from air and water, the Pythagoreans thought all things came from numbers. Consequently, the study of numbers tells us about the natural world. The soul was considered entombed by the body.

The dualistic doctrine of opposites (limited and unlimited, odd and even, one and plurality, right and left) was highly regarded among the Pythagoreans. The first pair limited and unlimited was regarded as basic and the subsequent opposites (ten in all) were regarded as various aspects or expressions of the first. The origins of our world is compared to the generation of number series and the series of solids where the world has grown from a primal unit. This unit "breathes" in air and "nothingness," splits up, behaves in a certain way as to impose limits on a previous unlimited state. This unit is considered male whereas the unlimited state is considered female.

The Pythagorean view of the universe represents a shift from Ionian philosophy the geocentric view. At the center of the universe is located the original fire. It governs the universe. Round it circles a counter-earth, then the earth, moon, sun and five planets, bringing the total number to ten, the perfect number, including the center fire. Fire is the center of all things and the earth is one of the stars for which night and day is caused, circling around the central fire.

Pythagoras's philosophy used reason and observation to gain an understanding of the universe, bringing man's nature closer to its own. It was Pythagorean's concept of the *kosmos* (perhaps the one who first called the world *kosmos*), that described the universe as an orderly arrangement, a structural perfection, containing beauty. The world seemed to be a perfect whole, a model of order and regularity, seen by the Greeks as a ceaseless wheeling of heavenly bodies in a perfect circle bringing about day and night and the change of seasons. By studying this order, its reproduction can be done in our own souls. This is where philosophy becomes an assimilation of the divine within the limits of the mortal body.

As noted, the Pythagorean belief system had a mixture of religion and science. Fire was given the central position because it was regarded with "religious awe." It was located at the center and was a "most horrible place."

It was given titles such as the Hearth of the Universe, Tower of Zeus, and the Throne of Zeus.

Plato incorporated the main tenets of Pythagoreanism in regards to the immortality of the soul, philosophy as an assimilation to the divine, and the mathematical basis of the divine. The Pythagoreans recognized no other type of things than the sensible and held that things imitate numbers. Number was a property of things; number was the essence of things. Later, the outcome of joining the materials of Pythagoras with Plato's teachings netted in the Neo-Pythagorean movement, which started in the first century BC. The interest in Neo-Pythagoreanism were religious which emphasized the number-mysticism and astral theology, common to the tendencies of the day.

Any line or object with magnitude is infinitely divisible, constructed of an unlimited number of infinitely small magnitudes. The essence or real identity of a thing is determined by its structure, not the stuff of which it is made. The earth is spherical; it is not the center of the universe. He implemented the practice of silence. The influence of music and study of mathematics were all viewed as valuable aids to tending the soul.

From Pythagoras to Plotinus (3rd cent. A.D.) there is a strong mystical element. This is the root of Neo-Platonism.

HERACLITUS (C. 540 - 475 B.C.)



Background

Heraclitus is called the philosopher of "flux" based on his statement that "No man steps into the same river twice." His dates were c. 540—475 B.C. He belonged to the ruling families of Ephesus. He is known as the "dark philosopher" because of the obscure nature of his views. His writings are very esoteric and prophetic. He was the first natural law philosopher, speaking of a Logos beneath the flux of experience. His philosophical thinking on the moral law can be traced from him through the Stoics, on into the New Testament (Rom. 2:12-15) through St. Augustine, into Thomas Aquinas, then the Anglican Richard Hooker to John Locke, and into Thomas Jefferson who spoke of "Nature's Laws" that came from "Nature's God" in the Declaration of Independence. Heraclitus was melancholy, aloof and solitary. He expressed contempt for the common herd of citizens.

The exact dating of Heraclitus life before 500 B.C. is not possible because biographies and documentation is non-existent. Some of the quotations made by Plato may have been out of context and are therefore unreliable as well. We do know that his permanent residence was in Ephesus, an Ionian city in Asia Minor. His style of writing, at times biting, earnest and prophetic, gave him the nickname of "obscure" because it was centered around illustrations rather than argumentation. Paraphrasing his work is difficult because his writings were prophetic in nature. He is especially known for his concept "unity of opposites."

Heraclitus was active in the year of 500 B.C. There is little known about his life but fragments of what he did say can be found throughout ancient literature. He did not like people and was critical towards the masses. He was known for being obscure and not clearly understood, with his short pithy sayings, filled with metaphors, puns, and paradoxes.

His Epistemology

According to Heraclitus, knowledge can be obtained only by combining the information provided by the senses with the discipline of reason. Sense experience tells us that everything is in flux; everything is a process. Life is like a river; always changing. He began a long line of philosophers who stressed sense experience. This included Aristotle, John Locke, Bishop Berkley, and David Hume. There were called "empiricists" in contrast to "rationalist" who emphasized reason like Rene Descartes, Benedict Spinoza, and Gottfried Leibniz. Empiricists held that knowledge begins in the senses a posteriori (as a result of sensation). Rationalists believe that knowledge begins in the mind a Priori, that is, prior to or independent of experience.

One of his best known fragments says, "You cannot step twice into the same river; for fresh waters are continually flowing." Another metaphor is that life is the flowing forth of all things from fire and their subsequent return to its source, i.e., all things come from this "fire."The Stoics posing that the world would come to an end in by way of an intense uncontrolled fire at the end of what is called the Great Year found support in Heraclitus's view of natural theology.

From ancient times, Heraclitus is considered the founder of the perpetual flux school of thought, which promotes the concept of "all things flow" and if everything is always changing, nothing is ever fixed enough to be an object of knowledge. Heraclitus "flux" was like comparing all things to a river, meaning that stable natural objects change all the time yet total balance is maintained. But these two views fail to take into account the notion of *Logos* the orderly process whereby all change takes place. It is this idea of the *Logos* that is the true One in the doctrine of Heraclitus. In the fragments, he states, "Wisdom is one and unique; it is both willing and unwilling to be called by the name of Zeus (*Fr*. 32). . . . There is a law governing all things in the universe, which prevents the sun from overstepping its bounds (*Fr*. 94)." It

is here that *Logos* conveys the idea of law, intelligence, which is something removed from the material world. This *Logos*, symbolized by fire according to Heraclitus, is inextricably inseparably connected with fire and yet at the same time is harmoniously governing the universe. It is this "harmony" that is the basis *for*wisdom to acknowledge this, is the task of philosophy that sets the philosopher apart from the rest of men.

The soul has a nature like fire or air. The depths of the soul cannot be fully penetrated. Souls survive after death and receive their appropriate recompense. How may a consistent and abiding norm be had in a realm where incessantly changing circumstances affect the morality of human conduct? Answer: the measure or mean remains constant. It is only such unceasing change that makes stability and unity possible in the moral order. Wisdom is a dynamic grasp of one's own continually changing relations to the surrounding common world.

His Metaphysics

Our senses inform us that everything is in flux. Plato claims that later there were those who were referred to as Heracliteans that claimed that there is only flux, with no stability whatsoever, summed up in the formula: "All things are flowing." Plato here had in mind the fifth-century Sophists like Protagoras and Cratylus. This did not come directly from the doctrines of Heraclitus himself, for he promoted a stable flux (which is required in the balanced tension of the universe.) There is no being, only becoming. In a sense, he was the great grandfather of process theology that can be traced through Plato, Alfred North Whitehead (the father of Process Theology), Charles Hartshorne, Shubert Ogden, and John Cobb.

However, our reason informs us there must be a universal "Logos" (Law) beneath the flux of experience. So, there is an intellectual unity beneath all the diversity of sensation. The essence of all things or ultimate element was fire. There is one God (henotheism) who is the universal Reason behind everything. This reason or Logos is the basis for our moral life, thus providing both a theoretical explanation and a practical basis for life.

Heraclitus spoke of a "common Logos" which is the "all in one" He believed that the world was uncreated and that events that take place are in accordance to a "Logos." Since this Logos was able to communicate then it

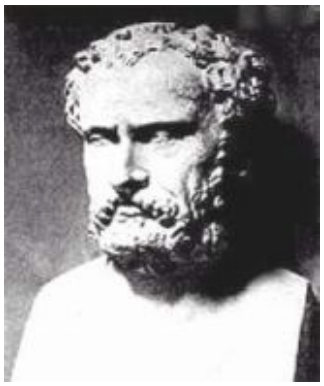
must be able to be heard and is therefore available to men. But it is man's folly that interferes with the Logos being heard. This Logos is an orderly process whereby all change takes place. The closest equivalent English word to the Greek Logos is the word "formula." Though it is difficult to apply a material aspect to this "formula," Heraclitus gave it the form of fire. This fire has a ruling effect and power on created things, and in effect, "steering all things." This Logos conveyed the idea of law and intelligence which was apart from the material. Here he assigns fire to the Logos as a possibility for the underlying nature of the "one" (as compared to Thales's water, Anaximander's the Boundless, Anaximenes air, and Xenophanes' earth). His "fire" played a similar role to that of water and air in the Milesian cosmologies and is thus the symbol applied to the Logos. This concept of "fire" seen by Heraclitus is not simply an indestructible substance, but rather is the unity of law, proportion, balance, and harmony.

His "unity of opposites" comes into play when this Logos is looked upon as the steering force of creation. These opposites function in concert with each other yet are united and harmonious. Opposites, like day and night, beginning and end, living and dead, hot and cold, wet and dry, function where one member changes into the other function without significant discontinuity. He expresses this idea in a series of metaphors, such as the following quote: "The path up and the path down is one and the same." To state "the road up and down is one and the same" is not to say that up and down are relative terms but rather that their unity of opposition results from their predictability of the same object. Heraclitus implies that each pair of opposites is united in the deity and functions in a divine state of "strife." In regards to his view of natural theology (where his predecessors had made attempts to answer the question of origins), Heraclitus states that this world had not been made by any man or god, but rather it has always been and will be as an ever-living fire, kindling itself by going in and out by regular measures.

The priority of fire is made to serve as an ethical function posed upon man. There is a tendency for man to harm himself, rooted in his pride. What man wants for themselves is not good for them and punishment awaits liars. Though Heraclitus's message regarding ethics is hard to discern, he does state that for one to be morally awake he needs to be alive to the Logos. If there are conflicts then the Logos must be imposed upon the disagreement in order for harmony to be achieved. Theology merges with politics in the doctrine of the one divine law that provides strength to all human laws. Anaximander had

projected justice into the world, but Heraclitus introduced the first extant connection of divine (unwritten) law with the laws of states, which was the origination of “natural law.”

XENOPHANES (C. 570 - 480 B.C.)



Background

Xenophanes was born in Colophon, Ionia and lived between about c. 570—480 B.C. He was a disciple of Anaximander. Xenophanes, the first non-Milesian philosopher, was also an Ionian. He was a native of Colophon and was likely born in 570 B.C. He probably left Colophon in Ionia when it was captured by the Persians soon after 546 BC. Tradition gives him credit for founding the Italian or Eleatic school of philosophy. He was very much influenced by the Milesian school, but there are significant differences between him and his Ionian predecessors. The work attributed to Xenophanes titled *On Nature*, though the natural word was not a major concern of his, was an attack on Homer's and Hesiod's depiction of the gods. It was not that their depiction of the gods in terms of reprehensible actions of men that bothered him, it was the innocuous anthropomorphism which attributed generation, dress, bodies, and speech to the gods, making them appear peasant-like, replacing their attributed divine nature that bothered Xenophanes. Xenophanes is most famous for his satirical attacks on the traditions of the Olympian theology, whose gods he maligned for their immorality and their supposed anthropomorphic character. What brought him further disgust were the animal-like characteristics that were being associated with these gods; the animal gods of the Egyptians. the snake god of the Chthonic religion, and the Homeric deities being made in the image of man. It was the anthropomorphismsassociated with the divine perhaps his major concern that needed to be abandoned according to Xenophanes. He argued for a single non- anthropomorphic god that can "shake" all things by the power of thought.

Xenophane's god is motionless in one place (*Fr*. 26) and is probably identified with the surrounding sky.

He was a philosophical poet who is reputed to have founded the Eleatic School of thought.

His Epistemology

Xenophanes believed that while opinion should be granted, the term "knowledge" should be withheld from total cosmic explanations. He emphasized unity and oneness amid the diversity of things.

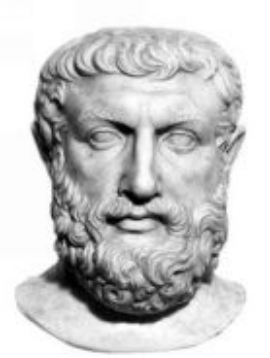
There is no certain truth about the gods and truth cannot be known fully supposed but only apparently known. This theme can be drawn from a fragment of Xenophanes: "There never was nor will be a man who has certain knowledge about the gods and about all things I speak of. Even if he should chance to say complete truth, yet he himself knows not that it is so (*Fr*. 34). . . . Yet the gods have not revealed all things to men from the beginning; but by seeking, men find out better in time (*Fr*. 18)." In antiquity some took this to mean that Xenophanes was a skeptic a doubter whereas others took him for an empiricist knowledge coming from experiences. Later, there were those who thought (based on a subsequent *Fr*. 34) that for Xenophanes god *can*know the truth. This led to the claim that he was able to distinguish two realms of existence man has one realm of knowledge whereas god has his realm. and also man's.

His Metaphysics

He believed that there is one supreme God, the greatest among gods and men, who is neither in form nor thought like mortals (a type of henotheism). God sees, thinks and hears as a whole, and is eternal. He is the unmoved, moving all else effortlessly by thought. He attacked anthropomorphic Greek deities, saying horses would paint the forms of the gods like horses. He made an attempt to demythologize the Greek mythology. His thinking foreshadows that of the late Martin Heidegger and Rudolph Bultmann who was behind Kittle's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* They thought that truth is to be found etymologically in the early Greek poets.

Xenophanes sees god as an imperfect being, a being that is immovable and unchanging. It would be fitting for god to “go from place to place” to accomplish his desires, but rather god operates without this toil, simply by thinking a thought. It is similar to a king immobile on his throne where he does not run his own errands. What transcends the world of man is the pronouncement that one god accomplishes his effects by his “thoughts.”“All of him sees, all thinks, all hears.” This god supreme and unlike men was the greatest among gods and men. (It may seem easy to read his fragments and conclude that this one transcendent deity is like the one found in Judaea-Christianity.) But Aristotle understands him as saying, and at times with later contradiction implying that god has a body, that the one or the all is divine and that god is coextensive with the universe moving all things by intellect. Xenophanes himself says in fragments, “All things come from the earth and in earth all things end. . . . All things are earth and water that come into being and grow.” (A similar view found in those like Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes with a change of emphasis to the divine, the notion of a transcendent god.)

PARMENIDES (C. 515 - 450 B.C.)



Background

Parmenides was the first great Monist (all is One). He lived between c. 515 and 450 B.C. close to the time of Malachi at the end of the Old Testament. He was from Elea, Italy. He was a pupil of Xenophanes and may have met Socrates when Socrates was a young man. He was the true founder of the Eleatic School. His interest was in government and is said to have drawn up laws for his native city of Elea. He wrote a poem depicting his journey in a chariot escorted by the Daughters of the Sun where he later meets a goddess in the heavens. From this poetic work the "Two Ways" are established: *The Way of Truth* and *The Way of Seeming* (i.e., the way of *Belief* or *Opinion*). Truth is found in the mind, of course, and the senses merely provided the basis for opinion.

Plato is the one who provides information that enables one to arrive at the time when Parmenides was at his prime, around 475 B.C. It is believed that he was born c. 515 B.C. He changed the course of Greek cosmology having an even more important effect upon metaphysicsand epistemology. He focused on the central problem of Greek metaphysics What is the nature of real being? He also established the frame of reference with which the discussion can be conducted. It is recorded that Parmenides, at the age of sixty-five, once visited Athens with his pupil Zeno, who was then forty. Parmenides was a pupil of Xenophanes and was also considered a Pythagorean who was also converted to the contemplative life by Ameninias, also a Pythagorean. The Parmenidean doctrine was not like the poets but rather his writings were in verse form. He is known for his attacking of his

predecessors, both those of the Ionian physicists and of the Pythagoreans whose cosmogony had many points similar to those of the Ionians. Plato remarked that it was Xenophanes that started the Eleatic school, but others claimed that he founded the school in the Phocaean colony of Elea in southern Italy.

Parmenides writings are not extant. His major work was most likely titled *On Nature* where about only 150 lines from fragments seemed to have come from. He is known primarily from Sextus Empiricus and Simplicius, and from a few lines found in Plato and Aristotle. He wrote in hexameter verse poetry.

His Epistemology

He assumed the laws of thought in his philosophy such as, 1) the Law of Non-contradiction, "A" is not non "A"; 2) The Law of Identity, "A" is "A"; 3) The Law of the Excluded Middle, "Either "A" or Non "A". He used these Laws to prove there could be no more than one being (Monism).

Parmenides made a distinction between reason and sense, between truth and appearance. True knowledge is not obtained through sense-perception but by reason. His entire philosophy was supposedly told to him by the gods. Interestingly, later Socrates will also say that his knowledge was of divine origin, given to him by the Oracle of Delphi. Later Rene Descartes would claim his inspiration for philosophy came from dreams of a man selling watermelons.

His Metaphysics

Parmenides offered the most powerful argument for Monism ever recorded. He suggested that "The One is sensual and material." He held that Being, or the One, is definite, determinate, complete, indestructible, unchangeable, spatially finite and spherical in shape. It is temporally limitless, having neither beginning nor end. His argument that all is One went as follows: There can be only one thing in the universe, because if there were many (two or more) they would have to differ. But according to the Law of Non-contradiction there are only two ways to differ, either by being or non-being (nothing). And thing cannot differ by non-being because to differ by nothing is to not differ at all (*reductio ad absurdum*). Further, things cannot

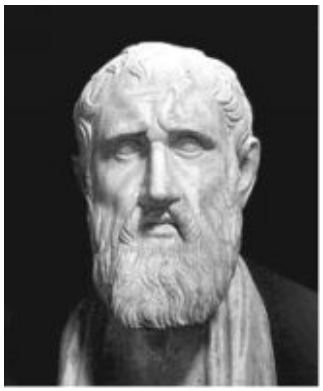
differ by being because being is that which they have in common and they cannot differ by what they have in common and makes them the same. Therefore, there are no differences and no two beings; there is only one being in the universe, hence Monism. Differences are only an illusion of our sense. Our minds inform us that all is One (Monism). Pantheism is the religious expression of this philosophy.

Paraphrasing Parmenides, if a thing is, it is and cannot not-be, since it is impossible to think of something that is not being. He was convinced that it is nonsense to speak of something as not being, since it would seem that it somehow is and then it is said not to be. Thus, what is true is what *it is*, and what is false is what *it is not*. Being is; non-being is not. Parmenides is saying that the senses must be left behind and that reason alone is all that should be relied upon. (Xenophanes and Heraclitusalso expressed doubts about sense perception, but it is here that Parmenides go beyond this position to maintain that nothing but falsity can be derived from the senses. This seems abstract when compared to his predecessors. His predecessors had thought that being had arisen from non-being this was the contention of Parmenides.

Parmenides' Mistake

As tight as the logic seems to be is in his argument, it contains a fatal flaw: it begs the question (*petitio principii*). He assumed what was to be proven. He assumes that all beings are the same or identical. But this is not necessarily so. There could be different kinds of being. For example, there could be an infinite Being and a finite being or beings. He is assuming a univocal concept of being—that being is always the same. Another way to state the fallacy is that he has a univocal concept of being, namely, that "being" means the same thing wherever it is found. But if "being" is used analogously, then there could be different kinds of being. This analogy view was held by Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1224—1274).

ZENO (C. 490 - 430 B.C.)



Background

Zeno was from Elea, Italy and was a student of Parmenides. None of his works are extant, but we know of five famous paradoxes through the writings of others. He was a pupil of Parmenides was active in politics, vindicated Eleatic doctrine, and argued against Pythagorean doctrine that things are numbers. Aristotle credits him with being the inventor of dialectic or logic. He was a clever riddler and a creator of conundrums; only one book is attributed to him. It argued against plurality and claimed to have developed forty arguments against multiplicity.

His Epistemology

His approach was strictly logical. Since our senses deceive us, we must use our minds. He dialectically defended Parmenides by reductio ad absurdum (showing that Being is indivisible One). Our senses tell us that space and time are real, but they deceive us. We think we can go across a room but we cannot. Since there is an infinite number of points between point "A" and point "B" and we can't get there without going half way, then half way between those two, and so on infinitely. But since we can never traverse an infinite, this means we can never really cross the room. It just appears that we can. Zeno became famous for his paradoxes, which later came to be called antinomies. An antinomy is a contradiction/paradox, a logical absurdity that could not be believed.

An Important Note—Theologians should be careful not to use terms of the "mysteries" of their faith. The Trinity is not a paradox, nor a contradiction; it is a mystery. Most Christian thinkers believe in things that go beyond reason, but not against reason. Compare First Timothy 6:20, "avoid . . . contradictions." Words have meanings and we should avoid misleading words.

His Metaphysics

Zeno's argument for the Parmenidean One is a form of the reduction ad absurdum. It goes like this: There can only be One being because to assume there are two or more is reducible to the absurd, it leads to paradoxes or contradictions. True being is found through thought, not through the senses. Motion is an illusion and is impossible. Multiplicity is not a reality. His dialectic showed the necessity of admitting the concept of continuous quantity. In short, he denied the many in order to affirm the One.

Zeno supposed that whatever exits must exist with a quantitative nature; no being can be non-quantitative. Arguing through his principle of the finite, yet infinite, "[f]or if it were added to some other being, it would not make it any larger; for if a thing without any size is added, the other cannot at all increase in size. And so what was added would thereby be nothing. [And the same holds true if it were subtracted from the other.] (*Fr.* 2)." Zeno proceeds to argue that any plurality would render things both finite and infinite in number. For "[i]f they are many, they have to be just as many as they are, and neither more nor less. But if they are just as many as they are, they must be finite (*Fr.* 3)." This illustration was to prove that there are an infinite number of points between indices A and B, making it impossible to traverse even halfway between them. Adding further disputation using the no size/infinite size correlation, he states, ". . . each must have some size and thickness and each part of it must be at a distance from the other. And the same reasoning holds good of the one that precedes it; for that also will have size and there will be one preceding it. It is the same, then, to say this once and to say it always; for no such part of it will be the last, nor without any portion to another. So if there are many things, they have to be both small and large; so small, on the one hand, as to have no size; so large, on the other, as to be infinite (*Fr.* 1)." Zeno proposes several additional arguments ("The Racecourse," "The Achilles," "The Flying Arrow," to name a few) to wage war against plurality in order to state his doctrine "of one", thus concluding that declared change was an illusion experienced by sense experience.

His treatise ushered in a new type of rational procedure, the part of logic that Aristotle later nameddialectic the arrival at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments. Zeno's method is that he takes what he holds as false but yet is admitted by his opponent. After he argues this position, he draws a direct opposite conclusion than his opponent's stated case. Unlike Parmenides, Zeno argues from the adversary's premises rather than the truth reached from the conclusion. This method results in contradictory conclusions and never provides the real knowledge of things. Zeno's arguments focused upon a view that confuses mathematical considerations with the real constituents of things

Zeno regarded the things of the cosmos as constituted basically of opposites that change into one another: to hot /from cold, to dry/from moist. However, there is not enough know about him that allows any noteworthy stand in regards to his philosophy of nature. Nor can he be given any status as a metaphysician. It cannot be denied that he had an outstanding position in the development of Greek thought. It seems as though he had a profound influence upon the fifth-century Sophists who were the professional teachers of the Greek. Zeno's most positive contribution was within his own school, that of the incorporeality of being. He became famous for his paradoxes, which later came to be called antinomies. Zenos' arguments refuted the Pythagorean doctrine of plurality by a series of clever *reductions ad absurdum*, illustrating that the world is not made up of units. He does this in order to affirm the unity of the one. True being then is to be found in the thought and not by the senses.

Zeno's Fallacy

Zeno's basic error was that he confused the abstract with the concrete. There are an *abstract* number of points between points "A" and "B", but not a *concrete* number. One can get only a finite number of sheets of paper between two finite points no matter how thin they are. The reason there can be an infinite number of abstract points between two points is that "points" are abstract and dimensionless. One can't have an infinite number of any actual thing in any actual amount of space is that no matter how large a number of them one has, still one more could always be added. And there cannot be more than an infinite.

MELISSUS OF SAMOS (C. 5TH CENT. B.C.)

Background

Melissus lived in the fifth century B.C. He was a physician from Samos and a student of Parmenides. He agreed with Parmenides and Zeno that what we sense is illusion, a mere appearance. He too was monistic. He led the "Samian fleet against the Athenians and defeated them (Plutarch, *Pericles* 26, quoting a lost work of Aristotle). He was a pupil of Parmenides who wrote in prose a book titled *On Nature* or *On Being*. Only ten fragments survive taken from Simplicius.

His Epistemology

He held to the notion that true being is found through thought, not through the senses. Truth cannot be found in sensations, only in the realm of thought. And the mind leads to unity, not multiplicity.

His Metaphysics

While he was a Monist, he disagreed with Parmenides that Being, or the One, is spatially finite. He believed Being is unchangeable because anything that changes has parts. He held that there is no pain or grief in the one. Being is all, and all is being. There is no vacuum or void because this is nothing, all is plenum, all is full. Being is indivisible. The One is not worthy of worship because it is static and cold.

The first of Melissus' fragments reads: "That which was, was always and always will be. For if it had coming into being, it necessarily follows that before it came into being, Nothing existed. If however, if Nothing existed, in no way could anything come into being out of nothing (*Fr*. 1)." Moreover, he continues by stating, "Since then it did not come into being, it is and always was and always will be and has not beginning or end, but is unlimited. . . . For it is not possible for anything to be always, unless it is completely (*Fr.* 2)." Using traditional Ionian language, he concludes that being is unlimited. Thus being means unlimited in duration, held "in the limits of mighty bonds," without beginning and end in time, and is completely or all together, having some notion of eternal duration. (According to Aristotle, Melissus is thinking

from a material standpoint, from which "limit" would mean a lack of further possible matter whereas Parmenides is speaking from a formal viewpoint, in which the notion "unlimited" would imply an indefiniteness, lacking perfection.) When it comes to spatial characteristics, Melissus argues from the standpoint that the limit in being would mean a lack of further possible matter. Accordingly, "nothing that has a beginning and end is either eternal or unlimited" (*Fr*. 4). The unity of being follows from its unlimited character. Its nature shows, consequently, that there can be nothing other than the one reality for it is impossible for there to be two unlimited realities (beings), for each would have to limit the other (*Fr.* 6). It further follows that there is an exclusion of multiplicity (or division) that renders it an impossibility for being to have any bulk or body. "If therefore Being Is, It must be One; and if it is One, it is bound not to have a body. But if it had bulk, it would have parts, and would no longer Be (*Fr.* 9)."

It is uncertain what Melissus meant by "body" and "bulk" in contrast to this spatial extension. However, Melissus was aware that his doctrine posed a problem: a being that was extended in space and yet indivisible with no outside parts. He attempted to solve the problem through the exclusion of body and bulk from his conception of the extended plenum where there is no rarefaction or condensation, nor local motion.

He saw truth as something that is entirely unchangeable. "And if it changed, Being would have been destroyed, and Not-Being would have come into being. Therefore, if Things are many, they must be such as the One is" (*Fr.* 8, 6). Further, pain nor grief could be found in being because this would involve a change in bodily arrangement. His dialectic is meant to show that the admitted system of belief regarding multiplicity and change are absurd. Further, his cosmology, as scant as it is, only seems to indicate that nothing in nature is firmly established and that all things are potentially corruptible. Thus, concluding that the sense world is an illusion.

EMPEDOCLES (C. 493 - 433 B.C.)



Background

Empedocles was probably born about 493 B.C., though some say as early as 521. He died in 433 B.C. He was a Sicilian from the city of Akragas. In addition to being an active citizen and politician, he contributed to the growth of medicine. He is the first philosopher of whom we have a good deal of information. His philosophy was expressed in poetic form. He wrote a major work *On Nature* and one called *Purifications.* His writing style was epic verse. He was not overly original in thought. Only fragments survive. He described himself as "a deathless god, no longer a mortal."

His Epistemology

Unlike the Monist, he was a pluralist who trusted his senses. The world of senses does not bring us illusion alone, it is the world of becoming but it gives us a way to the knowing of being. We know the real world through the sensible world. He made no disjunction between thought and perception.

His Metaphysics

The world-process is circular, there being periodic world cycles. This is very Eastern in concept, if not in origin. Matter is eternal and indestructible. Objects as wholes begin and cease to be, but they are composed of material particles, which are themselves indestructible. He invented the familiar classifications of four elements that are fundamental and eternal kinds of matter – earth, air, fire, and water.

Like the Pythagoreans, he taught the transmigration of souls (reincarnation). The gods control many factors of reality in a mixture of elements. Eros love holds all the cosmos together and strife separates it. Eros is a cosmic cohesion which explains the unity of the world. God cannot be proved, but he is immediately certain. We know God intuitively, but not discursively.

Nature exists as a multiple manifestation of God in three levels: Four roots have primacy and are imperishable: Dualism has two roots– love and hate which move the corporeal world. Then, there is Monism— the state of unity, *sphirous*, that is achieved by love. He was a philosopher of pluralism, stressing the reality of knowledge through the senses.

Empedocles was influenced by Pythagoras and Parmenides. Headmits that there is a real process in nature whereas Parmenides says that all motion and change is illusionary. Empedocles explained that natural change was the result of a combination, separation, or regrouping of the four basic elements: water, air, fire, and earth with these roots having no origin. However, there remains the continual shifting and the appearance of change. To him, describing the natural process in terms of birth and becoming and death and destruction is to follow a linguistic convention which is misleading. In reality, there is only mixing, unmixing, and remixing of these elements. In effect, these four elements, as the basis, point towards the composition of all material particles, what men call "substance,"where these neither come into being nor perish. This process is under the influence of the Cosmic Process two opposite forces, love (or Attraction, bringing together) and hate (or Strife, bringing destruction), that act in continuous exchange where ". . . each has its own character, and they prevail in turn in the course of Time" (*Fr.* 17, 28-29). Only when the process is unified through the predominance of love does the cosmic process reach a state of dependability, a circular equilibrium mingling and uniting these particles in all directions.

Empedocles also adopted Parmenidesposition of Being it cannot arise nor pass away, nor can being arise from not-being nor pass into not-being. Matter is without beginning and without end; it is indestructible. "Fools! for they have no far reaching thoughts who deem that what before was not comes into being, or that ought can perish and be utterly destroyed. For it cannot be that aught can arise from in no way is, and it is impossible and

unheard of that what is should perish, for it will always be, wherever one may keep putting it"(*Fr.* 2).

The *Purifications*, Empedocles' second writing teaches about the transmigration of the soul, describing himself going among the people in towns "as an immortal god, no longer a mortal, held in honor by all, . . ." (*Fr.* 112). In this poem, he teaches regarding his own transmigration. "For by now I have been born as a boy, girl, plant, bird, and dumb sea-fish" (*Fr.* 117). In addition to the teaching of the transmigration, he also stresses that in order for a human to have true happiness they must have correct knowledge of the gods. "Happy is he who has acquired the riches of divine thoughts, but wretched the man in whose mind dwells an obscure opinion about the gods!" (*Fr.* 132). Empedocles states that it is not through ordinary cognition that man can grasp the divine because "[the divine] has no head, arms, feet, or other organs, but is 'Mind, holy and ineffable, and only Mind, which darts through the whole universe with its swift thoughts" (*Fr.* 134).

INTRODUCTION TO ATOMISM

The doctrine of Atomism was first advanced by Leucippus and continued on by Democritus. They both flourished around 420 B.C. Leucippus had only written a little book titled *The Great World Order* and another piece *On Mind* (of which only one sentence has come down through antiquity). Democritus, on the other hand, had written a total of fifty-two works, among them are *The Little World Order, Cosmography,* and *On The Planets.* In later lists, his writing can be divided into Physical, Mathematical, Musical, Technical, and Ethical.

Aristotle , writing on Leucippus and Democritus explains the motivation behind these two philosophers. "But Leucippus thought he had a theory which, being consistent with sense perception, would not do away with coming-into-being or perishing or motion or the multiplicity of things. So much he conceded to appearances, while those who uphold the one he granted that motion is impossible without void, that the void is not-being and that no part of being is not-being. For being, in the proper sense, is an absolute plenum. But such a plenum is not one, but there is an infinite number of them, and they are invisible owing to the smallness of their bulk. They move in the void [for the void exists], and by their coming together they effect coming-into-being by their separation perishing" (*De Ge.,* 1, 8, 325a, 23ff).

Being then, in the strictest sense, "simply is," not one, but rather many and infinite in number. They are small particles that are invisible. There is void, empty space, i.e. not-being, in which these particles move about. When these particles gather and form clusters is when they become visible bodies. These clusters come to be and also perish. Atomism insists that there is a void (as compared to the doctrines associated with Empedocles and Anaxogoras) and that it must also exist. If by not-being is meant empty space, then not-being must exist as well. Being then are very small bodies, atoms, which means that these things cannot be divided. These atoms cannot come from one another but rather each one is its own being, not subject to change, becoming, nor perishing, all living within the void. (Where there is no atom, void exists.) Each atom has its own weight assignment but this weight did not invoke an explanation as to each atoms particular motion.

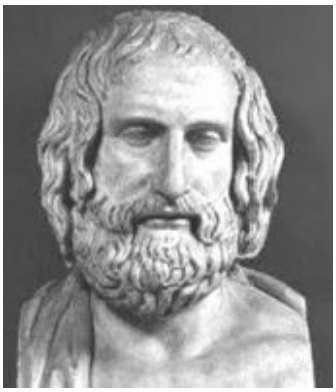
Incorporating the atomist elemental teaching to the creation of the world, the following is attributed Leucippus by Diogenes Laertius (IX, 31-32): “He declares the All to be unlimited, as already stated; but of the All part is full and part empty, and these he calls elements. Out of them arises the worlds unlimited in number and into them they are dissolved. This is how the worlds are formed. . . . many atoms of all manner of shapes are carried [and] . . . collect together and form a single vortex, in which they jostle against each other, . . . separate off, . . . [being so numerous] can no longer revolve in equilibrium, . . . [where] adjacent atoms continually combining when they touch the vortex. In this way the earth is formed by portions brought to the center coalescing. . . . as it is carried round the vortex, adds to itself whatever atoms it touches. . . locked together and form a mass . . .” (cited by Ralph McInerry, *History of Western Philosophy*.)

Leucippus and Democritusare said to have maintained that each world (for they considered that there were many worlds made) is enclosed in a kind of skin. This skin was formed by the linking of hooked atoms. It was through this method that more atoms were taken in after the initial stages of the world formation. The forming of these worlds is seen to be accomplished strictly by chance the collision and coagulations resulting in the order of things and not by a determined essential nature of things. In regards to human beings, this too is a chance effort having them generated from mud or slime.

This same “atomic” creation of things is also used for the explanation of the soul where it too is composed of atoms. The soul is a type of corporeal body within and pervading the body of atoms. The soul is spread throughout the body, and mind is a concentration of atoms in the bosom. Breathing is what keeps the soul in the body; death is the gradual escape of the soul atoms.

Atomism brings attention for a new look at the validity of sense perception, thus fine-tuning the distinction between appearances and reality. Anaxagoras attempted to assign Nous or Mind, Empedocles assigned the four elements and Love and Strife, and now the Atomists provide no room for anything other than the consideration of atoms and empty space being generated and formed into material things through the act of chance.

ANAXAGORAS (C. 500 - 428 B.C.)



Background

Anaxagoras probably lived between c. 500—428 B.C, though some believe he was born as early as 534 B.C. He was born in Clazomenae in Asia Minor (now Turkey). He was the first philosopher to settle in Athens (c. 480/479 B.C.). He was brought to trial by his political opponents in about 450 B.C. He moved to at Lampsacus, a colony of Miletus in Ionia. According to Plato, he was tried and condemned on charges of impiety and Persian leanings. He retired in Ionia where he settled in a colony of Miletus and probably founded a school. He wrote only one work primarily concerned with the problems of cosmology. Fragments of his writings are preserved by Simplicius.

His Epistemology

He believed the senses are misleading as to the true nature of the world. Knowledge is possible only through the understanding contributed by Mind. While we perceive manyness in our senses, the only way we can bring structure to it is thru the Mind.

His Metaphysics

Being neither comes to be nor passes away, but is unchangeable. Matter is indestructible. There are no indivisible particles. All reality is seen as an indefinite number of seeds. In concrete objects of experience there are particles of all things. “In everything there is a portion of everything.” He anticipates Alfred North Whitehead and process theology. His key

contribution was in introducing the principle of Nous or Mind which will be greatly used later by Platonists and Neo-Platonists. Nous has power over all things. It set in order all things, and is present in all living things. Nous controls everything. Nous or Mind is material, being "the thinnest of all things," occupying space. These Greek and Italian philosophers had a very difficult time of thinking of pure spirit. Plotinus still struggled with this in the third century A.D., as did St. Augustine after him (in the fourth century). Nous does not create matter (it is eternal). Nous sets matter in motion.

Anaxagoras, in general, followed the traditional Milesian doctrine regarding the formation of the cosmos. He accepted the hypothesis of Parmenides that Being neither comes into existence nor does it pass away, but did not accept Empedocles' teaching of the two physical forces of Love and Strife. "The Hellenes do not understand rightly coming into being and passing away. For nothing comes into being or passes away, but there is a mingling and a separation of things which are" (*Fr.*17). In addition, he does not agree with Empedocles that this Being is represented by the four elements earth, air, fire, and water. Rather Anaxagoras teaches that everything that "qualitatively" has parts is the same as the whole, where this whole is ultimate and underived. According to Aristotle, Anaxagoras regarded the elements as mixtures composed of many qualitative differing particles. In the beginning, "[a]ll things were together, infinite both in number and in smallness; for the small was too infinite. And, when all things were together, none of them could be distinguished for their smallness" (*Fr.* 1) and "in everything there is a portion of everything" (*Fr.*2). It is here that changes are accounted for changes are not seen as an illusion but rather as a fact of the senses.

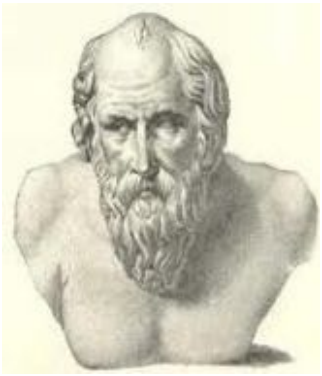
Of the four elements, there were two dominating components that seemed to prevail over all and to be separated off from the rest of things. These two components were air and ether, being the most extensive components of the universe and dominating the original mixture from which all other elements were "separated off." "Such being the case, it is necessary to believe that there are many things of all kinds in all composites, and the seeds of all things, seeds that have all kinds of shapes and surface characteristics and pleasant sensations" (*Fr.* 4). (The mention of "seeds" seems to be a metaphor to only provide an idea that there is the notion of a source for activity and development. The "things" Anaxagoras is referring to is apparently a representation of qualities like "the hot" and "the cold," and so on.) "Before these [composites] were separated off, all being together, no

surface characteristic was visible; for the mixtures of all things prevented this, the mixture of moist and dry, and the hot and the cold, and the bright and the dark, since there was also so much earth therein, and the seeds unlimited in number in no way resembling one another." . . . (*Fr.* 4). The simplest and primitive qualities separated off were the air-like and ether-like and it was these two unlimited elements that prevailed over all. From these [two elements], when they are separated off, earth is compacted; from the clouds water is separated off, and from the water earth, and from the earth stones are compacted by the cold; and these go outward more than the water" (*Fr.* 16). Thus, change is reduced to the mixing and separating off through the process of rotation of the universe of the already existing elements.

Anaxagoras introduces the idea of Nous or Mind in order to explain how this system operates. "Nous has the power over all things that have life, both great and small. And Nous had power over the whole revolution, so that it began to revolve at the start. . . . And Nous set in order all things that were to be, and all things that were and are now and that will be, . . . But no thing is altogether separated off from anything else except Nous. And all Nous is alike, both the greater and the smaller; but nothing else is like anything else, but each single thing is and was manifestly those things of which there are most in it" (*Fr.* 12). This Nous "in infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is alone, itself by itself" (*Fr.* 12). How did Anaxagoras conceive of Nous? He calls it "the finest of all things and the purest, and it has all knowledge about everything and the greatest power . . ." (*Fr.* 14). Nous or Mind is spoken of though as purest material and the thinnest of all things. Nous is not to be thought of as *creating*matter because matter is eternal. It may be stated then that this Nous is present in all living things men, animals, and plants.

The contribution that Anaxogoas made to Greek philosophy was that the world was no longer to be thought of as something that just happened; it was caused by a rational principle who initiated the process and has the power over all things through knowing all things. It was his doctrine of Mind (Nous) directing all things in the cosmological process that seems to have begun a further discussion of many philosophers to come.

DIOGENES (OF APOLLONIA) (C. 470 - 399 B.C.)



Background

He lived between c. 470—399 B.C. He flourished around 440—430 B.C. and died about the time of the Hebrew prophet of Malachi, the last prophet in the Old Testament. He was from Apollonia. He was one of the first philosophers to offer a teleological argument for the existence of God. He was most likely from a Milesian colony. Greek tradition describes him as a pupil of Anaximenes. He did most of his work in Athens and was indebted to the atomists' view of the elements. His writings depended on Simplisitus. They were not much in the way of originality but rather an extension of Ionian doctrine; titled *On Nature; Against the Physiologists, Eteorology, On the Nature of Man*. He is considered last of the natural philosophers.

His Metaphysics

He was strictly a natural teleologist in theology. He saw nature as a machine, and saw one primal substance and air was the common element. A combination of elements is impossible without the one primal substance. He saw no change as being possible without a standard of measurement. This measurement is the Mind, or God, and is behind the order of nature. It is knowing and eternal and is a Soul that animated the body of the world. He was an early panentheist. God is the soul of the world. There are no theists among the Greeks; they never got their ultimate metaphysical reality together with God.

His thought appears to be in some ways like Anaxagoras and in other ways Leucippus. His starting point seemed to have been from experiences

associated with the sensible world. Things could not change into one another unless they were modifications of the same basic reality, air (*Fr.* 2). These changes take place according to intelligence and fixed measures (*Fr.* 3). This intelligence, what man calls air, is what steers and has power over all things. This intelligence Diogenes holds to is a god that reaches everywhere, disposes everything, is in everything, and all things partake in it (*Fr.* 5). However, this air is what sustains men and animals, and is their soul and intelligence (*Fr.* 4).

Uniformity and harmony in the world is attributed to the underlying all-persuasive intelligence. Overlooking this fundamental phenomenon would mean ignoring the balance, measure, and intelligible structure that characterized every and all aspects of nature. This air is the guiding cosmic substance behind the animated world having the capacity to manifest itself in every possible condition as hot or cold, dry or moist illustrating its rationality and divinity. Thus, a part of God is in everything.

LEUCIPPUS (FL. C.450 B.C.)



Background

Leucippus flourished c. 450 B.C. He was from Miletus and a member of the Monistic School of Parmenides and a disciple of Zeno. But he was the founder the founder of the Atomist philosophy, a form of pluralism. This was similar to the situation between Plato and Aristotle where the pupil developed an entirely different school from his teacher. His major work was titled *The Great Diakosmos.*

He was the first to be considered as an atomist. Atoms were thought by the Greeks to be unsplitable. He is credited by Aristotle and Theophrastus to be the founder of the atomist school along with Democritus.

His writings: *The Great World Order* (may have been a cooperative work) and a treatise called *On Mind.* Only one sentence of his works has survived: "Nothing happens at random everything happens out of reason and necessity" (*Fr. 2*).

His Philosophy

According to Leucippus, the world is known through a purely mechanical account and explanation of reality. There is an eternal and infinite number of indivisible units called atoms. Atom means not splitable. They are imperceptible and have no quality save that of solidity or impenetrability. Infinite in number, they move in the Void (empty space). The finite emptiness is filled with these Atoms. They are all made of the same stuff, but they differ in shape and movement. There is a cosmic necessity, Nothing happens by

random but by reason and necessity. “What is, is no less real than that which is not.” The void is seen as having a metaphysical status. Atoms are eternally in motion. They differ not in stuff, but in shape and space which they occupy. In response to Parmenides, they differ by nothing. The soul is made of spherical atoms which move better that way. The soul is related to self-motion. Circular motion is considered eternal, whereas linear motion is considered imperfect. He did not consider an external Power or moving Force as a necessary cause for the primal motion. He considered there to be internal self-motion. Plato and Aristotle came up with a First Cause/Mover. He was a materialist because everything was made up of these “atoms”.

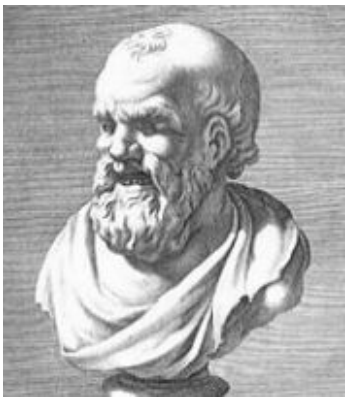
In the beginning existed atoms in the void, and that was all. No external Power or moving Force is assumed to be a necessary cause for the original motion. The Atomists philosophy of eternal movement of atoms was regarded as self-sufficient and neither did the early cosmologist think that motion required any explanation. Though it may seem that the Atomists believed in a type of chance, it is not correct to say that Leucippus also sided with this idea of chance, rather, to him the eternal and continuation of motion did not require an explanation. He saw no need to seek for an ultimate “First Unmoved Mover.”

There is only one sentence from Leucippus that remains in antiquity. This statement could possibly indicate that the chance doctrine taught by the atomists was not a part of his teaching. “Nothing happens at random; everything happens out of reason and necessity” (*Fr.* 2). However, it has been noted in antiquity that he did not supply the meaning behind “necessity.”

According to Leucippus, these atoms, where in Greek philosophy the meaning is that something could not be divided, were unlimited in number and in differing unlimited shapes, likened both with being and not-being (the existing void). This not-being was given equal status with being, and both existing in constant motion in reality, unlimited in number. The doctrine of Leucippus is summed by Theophrastus: “. . . he assumed elements unlimited (*in number*) and ever moving, . . . [and their unlimited shape] was because there was no reason why any should be of one shape rather than another and because he saw unceasing becoming and change in things. He assumed further that *what is,* is no more real than *what is not*, and that both are equally causes of the things that come into being. . . . [H]e said that they were *what is* and that they moved about the void, which he called *what is not* . . .”

Leucippus followed similarly to Empedocles when it came to understanding cognition. Sensation and intellection were explained by using the idea of groups of particles, called *eidola*. Sensation occurs when there is a modification to the senses, not giving a true knowledge of things as they really are. Truth is discerned through reasoning illustrating the atomic establishment of all things. Because of this modification, things may appear different to different individuals.

DEMOCRITUS (C. 460 - 370 B.C)



Background

He probably lived between c. 460 and 370 B.C., though some say he was born as early as 500 B.C. He died just after the Old Testament was finished. He was probably from Abdera, Thrace. But Greek tradition places him from Miletus. Tradition says he visited Athens, and he is known as the "laughing philosopher." He wrote copiously, but there are no works in existence. However, some of his thoughts has been handed down through Diogenes Laertius and ranged in topics from ethical, letters of music, and the arts, to physical, mathematical treatises and miscellaneous considerations. He wrote *The Lesser World Order* and possibly including other works titled *The Great World Order* and *On Nature of the Cosmos*.

His Philosophy

His account of sensation was a mechanical one. Images pass through the air and are subject to distortion by the air. Hence, sense-knowledge is not true knowledge. He was an atomist, claiming nothing exists as much as aught. The void was nothing with different places in it, but still something. His view was similar to Leibniz and his monads. He ascribed size and shape to atoms, but not weight. He believed in a soul, which was present even in dead bodies and rocks, a kind of animism. In regard to God, he believed that the world stuff is divine and the Greek gods were personifications of natural phenomena. They should be followed in mortality. He believed that divine man-like beings had appeared to men sometime around 400 B.C. He believed in a moral wisdom with moderation as the key to happiness. Aristotle will come out of

this school and develop moral wisdom as the moderate position between these two extremes.

Aristotle's work *On Democritus* is extant, and his doctrine on atomism has been summarized by Simplicius. The nature of eternal things, consisting of small substances, unlimited in number, is posited that they exist in a void, naught (nothing), and the unlimited. Each of these substances was known as reality but were unable to be detected by the senses, though they were called to have all sorts of shapes. Coming-to-be and passing-away was simply the uniting and separating of these atoms as observed in living and non-living things. The continual motion of these atoms accounted for all things in the sensible universe. However, the original cause of this motion was not dealt with, apparently because there was no need for an explanation. The motion was only attributed to their being its necessity to exist. In addition, Democritus still considered the earth to be flat and oblong in shape.

Coinciding with the atomist position regarding chance as the driving force behind the material world, Democritus related this chance doctrine to morality. He relates this to those unforeseen happenings that are otherwise controlled by human understanding. Dependence on chance is the inclination that man chooses when he does not use his intelligence as his guide (ref. *Fr.* 197). "Men have fashioned an image of Chance as an excuse for their own stupidity. For Chance merely conflicts with Intelligence, and most things in life can be set in order by an intelligent sharp-sightedness" (*Fr.* 119). Man can only blame their own lack of intelligence when things turn out harmful or of no benefit. As Democritus says, "But the gods are the givers of all good things, both in the past and now. They are not, however, the givers of things which are bad, harmful or non-beneficial, either in the past or now, but men themselves fall into these through blindness of mind and lack of sense" (*Fr.* 175). Hence, he promoted moral wisdom of self-knowledge and moderation which resulted in man living cheerfully. "Moderation increases enjoyments, and makes pleasure still greater" (*Fr.* 211).

Man, according to Democritus, is a microcosm (*Fr.* 34), a sort of miniature universe. He seems to be continuing the Ionian tradition of viewing man's behaviors with the activities external universe. Man's soul, able to penetrate through everything and set things in motion, was likened to in terms of fire atoms. These spherically shaped fire atoms are likened to divine nature. Under the characteristic of heat, the soul is present in all things, and according

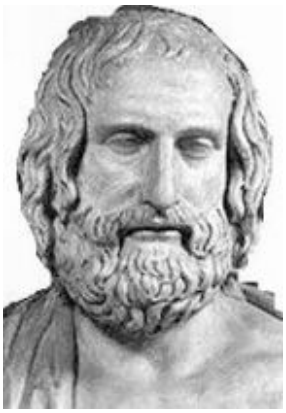
to Democritus, even in stones and dead bodies. However, the soul perishes with the body, a gradual leaving, not instantaneous.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOPHISTS

The Greek term "sophist" originally meant a skilled craftsman or artist. It was also used for anyone who was renowned for their theoretical or practical knowledge. The Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Socrates, and the natural philosophers were all referred to as sophists. Generally speaking, the title was associated with anyone who was in pursuit of wisdom (*sophia*).

Later in the fifth century, the meaning broadened to include those who were making a profession of wisdom by earning their livelihood teaching their own brand of wisdom. The democratic states allowed these teachers a platform from which to promote their doctrines. It so happened that the art of swaying assemblies was the key to excelling in political power. For the Greek, this political excellence was sought after and was compensated for handsomely. Thus, the sophists became the professional teaching class of Greece. However, their teaching did not bear on the truth of matters but rather on the art of convincing others by not aiming at the discovery of the objective of the question at hand but instead at a successful and convincing presentation. Aristotle stated (in *Metaphysics*, [Lambda] 2,1004b17-26) that sophist teaching provided an *appearance* of wisdom, but in actuality, it *was not* wisdom at all. Plato also refused to concede that the sophist was after genuine knowledge.) The two most prominent sophists of the fifth-century were Protagoras of Abdera and Gorgias of Leontini.

PROTAGORAS (C.485 - 410 B.C.)



Background

Protagoras lived between c. 485—410 B.C. He was from Abdera, Thrace, though he lived much of the time in Athens. He drew up a constitution for the Panhellenic colony of Thurii. He was a pioneer in the study and science of grammar. He was a sophist and had a reputation for teaching people to argue, but was not interested in truth. However, he wrote a book on truth. In First Corinthians chapter one, the apostle Paul refers to these sophists, "The world by wisdom knew not God." His major works were *On Truth, On the Gods, Antilogic* (only fragments remain). According to Plato's *Protagoras,* he was the first to openly declare that he taught for money.

His Epistemology

Reality is not knowable, that is, we do not know them the way they are. We cannot know things as they are. We do not know them independently of the way we talk about them. He was the first ancient relativist. He taught a dialectic that there are two contradicting views on everything. Every topic had a pro and con.

His Metaphysics

His most famous statement is that "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not" (*Fr.* 1). Sextus interprets the assertion as each thing is relative only to that person. Aristotle understands it to mean that things are perceivable when they are only

being perceived by the human senses. In reference to Eleatic background, it means that man is the measure of both being and not-being. It may seem then as though Protagoras is reducing all human knowledge to the persons own "opinion."

He said, "About the gods I have no way of knowing either whether they exist or do not exist; nor what kind they are in form; for many are things that hinder knowledge, the obscurity and the fact that the life of man is short" (*Fr*. 4); Plato used him as his protagonist because he was an ancient relativist. He was agnostic and felt there was no way of knowing whether gods existed.

His Ethics

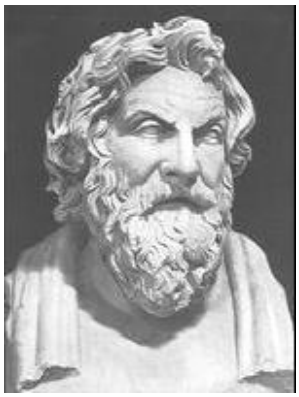
Ethical judgments are relative. Everything is perspectival. There is no question of one ethical view being true and another false, but one view may be "sounder," more useful or expedient. In this he foreshadowed the modern pragmatist William James and the situationist Joseph Fletcher.

Protagoras was the first to state that there are two contradictory accounts about everything where mutually exclusive aspects can be found. This is known as dialectic. However, the details of how he accomplished this are not available. Nevertheless, he is credited with the unique ability to take the weaker side of an argument and skillfully making it appear the stronger side of the dispute. One unsubstantiated traditions speaks of Protagoras meeting a Persian Magi, who imparted knowledge to Protagoras, his statement seems to declare the difficulties associated with proving anything rationally either for or against the existence of the gods.

Plato, writing in *Theaetetus*, depicts Protagoras as stating that ethical judgments are relative. "For I hold that whatever practices seem right and laudable to any particular State are so for that State, so long as it holds by them." Plato continues: "In this way it is true both that some men are wiser than others and that no one thinks falsely." This may mean that a man who thinks that there is no absolute truth (i.e., truth is relative), is hardly in a position to *absolutely* say publicly that "no one thinks falsely." However, Plato mentions in *Protagoras* that it appears what Protagoras is conveying is that Law in general is based on a foundation of certain ethical tendencies that are implanted in all men, but the individual varieties of State Law are relative,

where one State Law may be perhaps more “sounder” or useful than another States, but both being true.

GORGIAS (C. 483 - 375 B.C.)



Background

Gorgias was born about 483 and died in 375 B.C. He was from Leontini in Sicily. There he was an ambassador to Athens. He was a pupil of Empedocles. He eventually renounced philosophy, devoting himself to rhetoric, which he regarded as the mastery of the art of persuasion. He was an ancient deconstructionist. He was a teacher of rhetoric and was interested in natural science. He was a sophist who was led to skepticism by Zeno's dialectic. He wrote a major work was *On Not-Being or Nature* handed down through a work by Sextus Empiricus titled *On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias*. He was native of Leontini in Sicily. He knew Socrates and was a pupil of Empedocles. He led a delegation to Athens in 427 B.C.

His Philosophy

He was the first strong agnostic in the ancient word, a precursor of Immanuel Kant. Gorgias' philosophy, preserved by Sextus, can be stated in three concise propositions: (1) Nothing exists, i.e., there is nothing. (2) If anything exists, it is incomprehensible, i.e., unknowable. (3) If it is comprehensible, it is incommunicable to others. Recorded from fragment four, he substantiates his first position by arguing that "It cannot be everlasting; if it were, it would have no beginning, and therefore would be boundless; if it is boundless, then it has no position, for if it had position, it would be contained in something, so it would no longer be boundless; for that which contains is greater than that which is contained, and nothing is greater than the boundless. It cannot be contained by itself, for then the thing containing and the thing

contained would be the same, and Being would become two things both position and body which is absurd. Hence if Being is everlasting, it is boundless; if boundless it has no position ("is nowhere"); if without position, it does not exist." Now here is where Gorgias points out the major flaw in the Parmenidean doctrine. "Being cannot be One, because, if it exists, it has size, and is therefore infinitely divisible; at least it is threefold, having length, breadth and depth" (*Fr*. 3).

Position two is further elaborated upon by Gorgias contending that "[i]f the concepts of the mind are not realities, reality cannot be thought; . . . if the thing thought is not existence, then non-existence is thought about; this is equivalent to saying that 'existence', reality, is not thought about, cannot be thought. . . . Therefore reality is not the object of thought, and cannot be comprehended by it. Pure mind, as opposed to sense perception, or even as an equally valid criterion, is a myth" (*Fr*. 3). It is here that he embraces empiricism knowledge derived from experience.

Lastly, position three is defended by his conclusion that communication about existence is inexpressible. "The things which exist are perceivables; the objects of sight are apprehended by sight, [etc.] so that these sense perceptions cannot communicate with one another. . . . Hence, since the objects of sight cannot be presented to any other organ but sight, and the different sense-organs cannot give their information to one another, similarly speech cannot give any other information about perceivables (*Fr*. 3)." Gorgias seems to be saying that speech is different than sense perceptions and therefore is unable to express that being exists.

If the descriptive title *On Not-Being or on Nature* was indeed a single title and was meant to be an illustration that the world of nature is a world of not-being, then he is implying that the world cannot be understood nor explained in terms of being. It seems as though Gorgias is attempting to remove the aspect of being, which was formerly understood in the previous Eleatic doctrines from the world in which man lives and acts.

CRATYLUS (C. 428 - 348 B.C.)

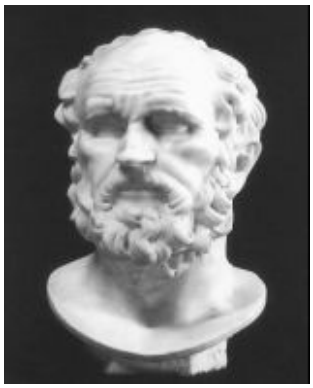
His Background

Cratylus was an older contemporary of Plato, living from c. 428—348 B.C. He lived in Athens and was a disciple of Heraclitus and his flux philosophy. However, he carried it to an even great extreme. Plato named one of his dialogues after him. His writings have not survived.

His Philosophy

According to Aristotle, Cratylus' teaching began with the doctrine of the flux of phenomena. Taking Heraclitus' statement "one cannot step into the same river twice" he added to the reference of the river by saying, "nor once either." His substantiation of the additional stipulation was that if one takes the first step into the river, the river is at that time itself changing. This led him to come to the conclusion that one ought not say anything since no true statement can be made about a thing that is always changing. If asked if he existed, he would simply move the finger, supposedly indicating that he too was in process. Plato took from Cratylus' teaching that all sensible things are always in a state of flux and therefore there is no knowledge about these things.

THRASYMACHUS (C. 459 - 400 B.C.)



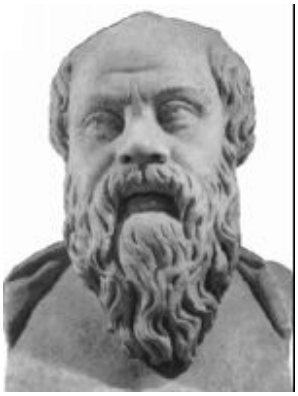
Background and Beliefs

Thrasymachus lived between c. 459 and 400 B.C. He was a sophist from Chalcedon but spent a good bit of time in Athens. His writings include a *Great Text book* and *Subjects for Oratory.*

His Philosophy:

Plato presents him in the *Republic* as the brutal champion of the rights of the stronger. He said, "might makes right." That is, justice is nothing less than the advantage of the strong. He is also known as a rhetorician and a fashioner of middle diction a style that is between austere and the plain. Tradition has it that he was able to develop a method that elicited both pity and anger from his audiences. Plato, though, is said to outlaw this method in his writing titled *Laws*. Perhaps Aristotle benefitted from Thrasymacus' writings by writing his own *Rhetoric*.

SOCRATES (C. 470 - 399 B.C.)



Background

Socrates was born c. 470 B.C. and died in 399 B.C., the time of the Jewish Prophet Malachi. He lived in Athens. He was the son of Sophroniscus, a stone mason. His family was one of moderate means. Neglect of his private life led to comparative poverty. He had a wife Xanthippe and some sons. He was the teacher of Plato, one of the greatest philosophers of all time. In spite of his world-wide and long-term fame (for 2,400 years), we have no writings by him. All that we know is through secondary sources, though a number of them were contemporary sources.

He lived in Athens which he rarely left except for perhaps military service as a foot-soldier; his father was a stone mason, mother was a midwife by occupation; he was married; he was considered a Sophist teacher of wisdom; his life was one of moderate means. His neglect of his private affairs led to his poverty.

He died a noble death based on his ethic by drinking hemlock (a form of capital punishment in his day) instead of conforming to dictates from the government, including his death sentence, based on *their* accusation. He was accused of denying the gods (atheism) and of corrupting the youth by his teachings. He acted as his own lawyer and appealing to the authority of the Delphi Oracle, he presented his case before a judge and jury and lost.

His writings: advocated the motto: “know thyself” (arguing that no one would deliberately choose what will harm him and knowingly reject what will

benefit the most) did not leave any writings; what is known about him is through four principle sources: Aritophanes' fictional comedy the Clouds (423 B.C.), Plato's fictional Dialogues (first half of fourth century), Xenophone's fictional Memorabilia, Banquet, Apology, and Oeconomicus (first half of fourth century). Aristotle wrote little about him and Plato and Xenophon wrote the most extensive account.

Early Writings about Socrates

Socrates is known primarily through Plato's early dialogues: *Apology* (a defense of Socrates against the two charges of atheism and corrupting the Athenian youth), *Phaedo*, and *Crito*—two death dialogues. *A few others made reference to him.* Aristophanes—*The Cloud* satirized Socrates "wit shop." Xenophanes—*Memorabilia, Apology*, and *Symposium made reference to him, and* Aristotle, Antisthenes, and Aristippus also took note of him.

Socrates may have been a member of the School of Archelaus, the successor of Anaxagoras at Athens. He had been perplexed by various disagreeing philosophical theories, but received sudden light from the passage where Anaxagoras spoke of Mind as being the cause of all natural law and order. He abandoned Natural Philosophy. He had a "conversion" experience due the famous encounter with the Delphic Oracle. This led to his focus on moral philosophy. He distinguished himself for bravery in the Peloponnesian War. He was tried and convicted of not worshipping the gods of Athens and of corrupting their youth. He was sentenced to death. He drank the hemlock in the company of his philosopher friends (all men) and died.

Comparisons Between Christ and Socrates

Writers have often made comparisons between them, and there are several interesting parallels: (1) Both were poor. (2) Both were unjustly condemned to death. (3) Both died willingly. (4) Both were teachers. (5) Both had unique pedagogical techniques. (6) Both made an effective use of questions. (7) Neither of them left any writings.

The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard made a strong contrast between Christ and Socrates. The following is summarized and adapted from Kierkegaard's contrast:

Socrates's Wisdom
Christ's Revelation
Backward recollection
Forward expectation
Truth aroused within
Truth given from without
Truth immanent
Truth transcendent

Truth comes from wise man
Truth comes from God-Man

His Epistemology

If Plato is giving an accurate account of Socrates in his dialogues, then we can assume that he believed in a preincarnate existence where souls beheld the Forms (Ideas) and thus, were born with innate ideas. These ideas could be activated by recollection by using the technique of asking the right questions. He was the originator of the Socratic method of asking questions and acting as a midwife to the mind so as to "give birth to the truth". Socrates reacted against the relativism of the Sophists; he believed that universal definitions and fixed concepts were attainable.

His Metaphysics

Socrates believed in reincarnation, a spirit would with both a heaven and a hell. He believed in absolute truth and values. He sought to understand the relationship between universals and particulars. He gave a teleological argument for the existence of god or the *demiurgos*. Both the world and creation are eternal. The real world is the spiritual world of Forms (Ideas). This world is only a shadow of the real world. Socrates also held that the soul is immortal and that humans are souls who have a body. The goal in life is to be saved from the body and exist as a purified soul in the spiritual world. Matter (body) is of lesser importance than soul which is the higher part of humanity.

His Ethics

His predominant interest was in ethical conduct, seeking a universal ethical norm by which to control society. That would become "natural law." He was concerned about the practical aspect of knowledge and with virtue. He investigated piety and impiety, just and unjust, courage and cowardice. He had a high view of the mind in which questions could bring out correct answers.

The Socratic Method

In his early twenties, Socrates turned away from the cosmological speculations of the Ionians towards man himself. It seemed as though he began by studying the cosmological theories of East and West in the philosophies of Archelaus, Diogenes of Apollonia, Empedocles and others. Feeling disappointment by the various philosophical theories, Socrates was suddenly enlightened by the passage where he spoke of Mind as being the cause of all natural law and order. After studying his doctrine, he was disappointed to find that Anaxagoras did not explain how Mind worksin the universe by ordering all things for the good. This sent Socrates on his own line of investigation. After reviewing the philosophies previous to his own, he neglected the natural world as a whole and concerned himself with universal ethical matters and moral questions in the area of human conduct. He focused for the first time on definitions the essence (what the thing really is) of the word itself, centering on the nature of the Idea. He was concentrating on the nature (or virtue) of moral creatures rather than on particular instances. According to Aristotle, these moral definitions would end up being in contrast to the flux doctrine of Cratylus, placing the Socratic universal ethic in opposition to the Sophistic exaltation of opinion (*doxa*). His philosophy: he was dedicated to the same new intellectual inquiry into education, the science of effecting *arête* (excellence, living up to one's potential). His form of argumentation was similar to the Sophist, but his end goal was different. He had a moral purpose in mind. To him, philosophy was the searching for the answers not just learning the answers. This would typically involve a friend(s) who both were in love with the goal of truth and reality and willing to subject themselves honestly to the critical test of reason alone. The establishment of truth is not at stake but rather the question of whether the person will destroy himself by his false confidence (and lack of knowledge about) on the subject.

According to Aristotle, two things may be fairly ascribed to Socrates inductive arguments and universal definitions, both of which are concerned with the starting-point of science: but Socrates did not make the universals or definitions exist apart. A characteristic of Socrates doctrine, according to Aristotle, is that virtue is knowledge, it is the same thing to know the just and to be just.

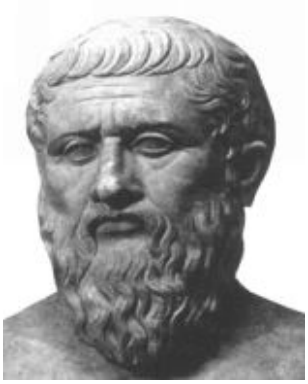
The technique Socrates would use, a form of dialectic, is what is called the Socratic Method asking questions to draw out answers from the other person, in a sense, disassembling the discussion. (This often led the other party seeing that they really did not know their subject.) The purpose of this line of questioning was to arrive at the nature of virtue itself through an examination of its particular instances. His aim was to discover the truth as a view to the good life. It focused on the practical knowledge of virtue. Aristotleshows that Socrates assisted in laying the foundation of a properly scientific knowledge the inductive argument. The concept behind this notion of induction is the "bringing to" or "leading to" the knowledge of universal truth through particular instances. It was an argument from analogy. The Socratic method, also called maieutics or midwifery and it ". . . [is] my art of midwifery . . . [that is,] I attend men [and] . . . look after their souls when they are in labor, . . . [T]he triumph of my art is in thoroughly examining whether the thought which the mind of the young man brings forth is a false idol or noble and true birth. . . . It is quite clear that they have never learned anything from me; the many fine discoveries to which they cling are of their own making. But to me and the god they owe their delivery" (*Theaetetus*, 150).

Socrates was concerned with universal definitions and with the attaining of fixed concepts. This was motivated by his predominant interest in ethical conduct which could afford men a solid foundation to stand amidst the Sophist relativist teachings. The Sophists, who advocated *relativistic* doctrines, also rejected the necessity and universal validity. In contrast, Socrates was struck by the fact that this universal concept remains the same even though particular instances may vary to which the definition stood fast. What he was attempting to do was find a universal definition that holds for all men. If, for example, justice was is defined and hold good for every man, then judgments can be made, not just on individual cases, but also the moral code attached to every state, in so far as they represent or draw back from the universal definition of justice.

For Socrates, virtue and knowledge were the same virtue is knowledge: to know what is just and to be just are the same. But what enabled the awareness that man knows what is right and yet does not do it? Socrates would reply, if he *really* knew, knowledge and virtue would be one. When considering the dialogue found in the *Protagoras* (351-358), there can be seen an assumed correlation between good and evil and pleasure and pain. While the innocent man, knowing what should be done, does not do it because of the pull of the senses, there seems to be a distinction between "knowledge" and ignorance. His bad dispositions may not have him recognize what justice is. Socrates may be identifying universal knowledge expressed in definitions. He believed that "the unexamined life is not worth living." The result is a self-knowledge constituted by what is peculiar to ourselves in a particular situation that one finds himself.

Just how much of this is what Socrates believed is difficult to tell since his view is mediated to us through Plato. He is the chief character in Plato's early dialogues.

PLATO (C. 428/7 - 348/7 B.C.)



Background

Plato was born in Athens to a distinguished family about. 428/427 and died in 348/347 B.C. He was one of the greatest philosophers of all time. No man has influenced Christianity more than Plato. His ideas were incorporated into Christianity from the earliest Fathers through Augustine and even somewhat into Aquinas and on into modern times. For example, he believed in moral and epistemological absolutes, in the reality of the spiritual world, in immortality, and that knowledge about reality if obtainable.

If you have not read *The Republic* by Plato, you are not educated. The dialogues of Plato represent one of the few indispensible sources of philosophizing, so much so that ignorance of them is tantamount to ignorance of philosophy itself. His lifetime parallels Nehemiah and Malachi in the Old Testament. He became a disciple of Socrates at age sixteen. He attended the trial of Socrates, and was greatly affected by his death. He visited Italy and Sicily, possibly to meet with members of the Pythagorean School. Our modern educational system is an heir to the Academy he founded in Athens (c. 388/387), as was the first European university (c. 1200 A.D.). Plato was forty-three years old at the birth of Aristotle, who was another of the greatest philosophers in the world—perhaps the greatest mind of all. Plato died at age eighty-one.

The major source on his life comes from his writings. His father was Ariston whose ancestry can be traced from the kings of Athens, his mother was a descended from Solon. He had two brothers, one half-brother (a result

of his father dying and his mother remarrying), and one sister; both sides of family belonged to the elite of the Periclean age, therefore influencing him to aspire a role in politics, but his real interests was in philosophy, not as a scholarly escape but rather to enable him to have a deeper and greater participation in public affairs. In his early youth he was influenced by "Heraclitean" philosopher Cratylus impressing upon him the idea about the sensible world as something in "perpetual flux." Later he was associated with Socrates which turned his interests towards the necessity of understanding stable and long-lasting human conduct. After attending Socrates' trial and execution at twenty-eight, Plato went to Megara and spent time with Euclides (the death of Socrates seemed to convert him to philosophy). At forty, he visited Italy and Sicily to perhaps to associate with some Pythagoreans and afterwards, he returned to Athens to inaugurate an academy. Plato was the greatest pupil of Socrates and was the master of Aristotle. No trio of intellectual giants like this has existed before or after them.

His Major Works

In chronological order, Plato's works are as follows:

Apology: Socrates' defense at his trial.

Crito: As a good citizen, and under an unjust condemnation, Socrates is willing to give up his life in obedience to the law of the State

Euthyphron: Socrates awaits his trial for impiety.

Laches: On courage.

Ion: Against the poets and rhapsodists

Protagoras: Virtue is knowledge and can be taught.

Charmides: On temperance.

Lysis: On friendship.

Republic: Book I, On justice.

Gorgias: The practical politician; the rights of the stronger versus the philosopher; justice at all costs.

Meno: Teachability of virtue corrected in view of ideal theory.

Euthydemus: Against logical fallacies.

Hippias I: On the beautiful.

Hippias II: Is it better to do wrong voluntarily or involuntarily?

Cratylus: On the theory of language.

Menexenus: A parody of rhetoric.

Symposium: All earthy beauty is but a shadow of true Beauty, to which the soul aspires by Eros.

Phaedo: Ideas and Immortality.

Republic: The State; metaphysical dualism strongly emphasized.

Phaedrus: Nature of love: possibility of philosophic rhetoric.

Theaetetus: Knowledge is not sense-perception or true judgment.

Parmenides: Defense of ideal theory against criticism.

Sophistes: Theory of Ideas again considered.

Politicus: The true ruler is the *knower*. The legal State is a makeshift.

Philebus: Relation of pleasure to good.

Timaeus: Natural science. Demiurge appears.

Critias: Ideal agrarian State contrasted with imperialistic sea-power.

Laws and *Epinomis*: Plato makes concessions to real life, modifying the Utopiainism of the *Republic*.

Letters 7 and 8 must have been written after the death of Dion in 353. [cf. Copleston, *History of Philosophy*.]

His Epistemology

The all-encompassing theme that has been associated historically with the name of Plato is the doctrine of Ideas. The Greek terms for both Ideas and Forms are derived from the same Greek verb "to see" and carry the same basic thought. For Plato, and Idea was real. Plato's primary concern with this doctrine is to lay the foundation for a sound moral and social position, thus being able to determine whether or not various individuals action were virtuous or not. Plato claims that all virtue consists in the knowledge of the good, and as knowledge, it is teachable "leading to the best way of life." He even goes so far as to say that ". . . no man voluntarily pursues evil, or that which he thinks to be evil. To prefer evil to good is not in human nature . . ." (*Protagoras*, 358D). So, to know the good, is to do the good.

Plato opposes the Protagorean doctrine of the relative nature of entities. In his *Cratylus*, he inquires whether names (entities) have a natural correctness or if they are a pure convention determined by man. He states, "it is evident that things are themselves possessors of some stable being (*ousia*) of their own, not in relation to us nor caused by us; . . . but of themselves they are disposed in regard to their own being (*ousia*) as set by nature" (*Cratylus*, 386DE). The permanent and stable nature of entities is used to establish the unchanging character of the Ideas against the concept of universal flux

(promoted by Parmenides). In addition, the Idea makes knowledge possible knowledge requires a fixed stable object. The *Cratylus* illustrates that knowledge has to originate from the unchanging nature of *being*. The role of Ideas as the foundation of all knowledge itself exhibits the characteristic of *being*, and *being* can only operate under the auspices of good. This goodness is further defended in Plato's *Republic* illustrating that the manner of good is the author of knowledge of all known things.

The successive Platonic doctrines gradually unfolds the doctrine of Ideas focusing upon the knowledge of virtues which care for the soul. However, his epistemology and his ontology overlap one another with his teaching on the nature of the Idea. Virtuous conduct proceeds from common knowledge of all entities and events stemming from Ideas and Forms. Ideas and Forms is where all scientific knowledge and intellectual communication is grounded. According to Plato, Ideas and Forms have to exist.

Plato believed that universal Forms (Ideas) exist in the real world which the human soul in a pre-incarnate form beheld in the spiritual world. On the occasion of sense perception or interrogation one can be brought to remember these forms. He believed that true knowledge is not found in sense perception but when one sees by intuition in a one-to-one correspondence with this real Ideas. This knowledge is objective and absolute. Thus, we are born with innate ideas (forms) which need to be drawn out from within our minds. Plato believed that we are born with innate ideas. Knowledge is *a priori.* We are not born a *tabula rasa* (blank slate), as Aristotle would say. For Plato, we get knowledge *a posteriori*, through the senses.

It is the seventh letter of Plato where he states to Dionysius of Syracuse the method of introducing one to philosophy. After whetting the appetite of the candidate to philosophy, he paints the grim picture of the program to be followed if one is to achieve the goal. ". . . One must point out to such men that the whole plan is possible and explain what preliminary steps and how much hard work it will require; for the hearer, if he is genuinely devoted to philosophy *and is a man of God* [italics, mine] with a natural affinity and fitness for work, sees in the course marked out a path of enchantment, which he must at once strain every nerve to follow, or die in the attempt. . . . Other practices than these he shuns to the end. . . . [A]s soon as they see how many subjects there are to study, how much hard work they involve, and indispensable it is for the project to adopt a well-ordered scheme

of living, . . . This test then proves to be the surest and safest in dealing with those who are self-indulgent and incapable of continued hard work, since they throw the blame not on their guide but on their own inability to follow out in detail the course of training subsidiary to the project"(340b-341a; Post).

The distinctive characteristic of Plato's philosophy is the doctrine of Forms. In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he provides a fundamental of Platonic doctrine: ". . . For, having in his youth first become familiar with Cratylusand with Heraclitean doctrines that all sensible things are ever in a state of flux and there is no knowledge about them these views he [Plato] held even in the later years. . . . Plato accepting his teachings, but held that the problem applied not to sensible things but to entities of another kind for this reason, that the common definition could not be a definition of any sensible thing, as they were always changing. Things of this other sort, then, he called Ideas, and the sensible things, he said, were all named after these, and in virtue of a relation to these; . . ." (987a29-987b13).

Socrates initiates his argument with the following premise: man is in a world surrounded by objects and provides names to these objects. (This includes giving names to actions, for example, justice.) Plato is suggesting that there is another entity to consider: the knowledge and understanding of such entities (and continuing the example, what is justice itself?). Plato asks in *Phaedo*, ". . . "Then must not true existence be revealed [. . .] in thought, if at all? . . . Is there or is there not an absolute justice? Assuredly there is. And an absolute beauty and absolute good? Of course. But did you ever behold any of them with your eyes? Certainly not. Or did you ever reach them with any other bodily sense? and I speak [. . .] of essence or true nature of everything. . . " (*Phaedo*, 65-66). The world of Forms or Ideas is another and better world than the sensible world around us. The recognition of these differences point the way to some sort of perfectness. Knowing things is more than just getting sensations. (Plato has divided the world into sensible entities and the Forms which are the cause of sensible entities where the soul is a sort of intermediary kind of entity.) Plato asserts that each man already possesses some sort of true thoughts about these entities. These thoughts are issued from the hand of God where the soul is living in the presence of the Forms, of true being. Plato states in the *Republic* that there is an overarching Good. "And so with the objects of knowledge: these derive from the Good not only their power of being known, but their very being and reality; and goodness is not

the same thing as being, but even beyond being, surpassing it in dignity and power" (*Republic*, 509).

His Metaphysics

Plato has different arguments for the existence of "God" or an Ultimate. The first is an argument for a First Mover (World Soul). He reasoned that: (1) Things move (known by observation). (2) But whatever moves is moved by another or it is self-moved. (3) Self-movers (souls) are prior to non-self-movers (for what doesn't move itself is moved by what does). (4) And Self-movers are eternal (otherwise there would be no motion). (5) Now there must be two self-movers in the universe, one to account for the regular motion (called good), and one to explain the irregular motion (called evil). The one which accounts for the good motion is the best, because it is the supreme Mover (World soul). (6) Hence, there is a Supreme Mover (Soul), God.

Plato also had an argument for a *Demiurgos* (or, World Former). It begins with the assertion that: (1) The cosmos would be a chaos without forms (pure stuff without structure is shapeless). The Chaos (formless) is evil and cosmos (form) is good. (2) All forms of good in the world come from a good Former beyond the world (chaos cannot form itself into cosmos). But the Former can't make good forms of things without a Form of Good after which to pattern them. (3) This form after which changing forms are formed must be an unchanging Form. For only the unchanging can be the basis of the changing. And only the Intelligible (Ideal) can be the basis for Ideas. (4) Therefore, there is both a former (Demiurgos) and the Form (Good) after which all things are formed by the Former.

Plato's conception of the visible universe harmonizes with Greek tradition stating that the cosmos is a living thing. However, he represents it as having an intelligent and provident cause: ". . . we say that the world became a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God" (*Timeaues*, 30B). The sensible world accordingly is only a world that can be understood by opinion only, not established by scientific mathematical inquiry. The world of being, according to Plato, is different that the world of becoming in which knowledge is based upon Ideas. Plato's Forms remains of the utmost importance; the Forms is the only true anchor for thought. This Form is not in the sensible world. For Plato, any explanation of the world that

suggests that it has its own intrinsic intelligibility is downright false. He is suggesting that the sensible world is a copy dependent upon the eternal model.

Plato introduces the Demiurge, what in modern terms is called the principle of causality, or the efficient cause, etymologically speaking, denotes a craftsman, a "worker for the people." This demiurge is modeled according to the Ideas and is the cause of the sensible world that is not (and cannot) be understood by humankind. The demiurge is not the creator itself, but rather is the handy-craftsman who induced definite order from materials that had already existed and were already in a state of chaos and disorder: i.e., he did not create materials out of nothing. ". . . Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for without a cause nothing can be created. The work of the creator, . . . must necessarily be made fair and perfect; but when he looks to the created only, and uses a created pattern, it is not fair and perfect" (*Timeaeus*, p. 28). The demiurge had to overcome the natural tendency of bodies to be in disorder and chaos mitigating against the perfect order in the universe.

As stated above, the necessary characteristic and motivation behind the Ideas for the craftiness of the demiurge is goodness. "He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be like himself as they could be. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good [and to share his goodness] and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable" (*Timeaeus*, 29E-30A). The motive to share the goodness was so that all other things could be as good as possible, that is, to be as much like the Ideas as he was able to arrange.

There is a pre-requisite that is associated with this world order of good and beauty. These evidence are found in the sensible world indicate the presence of a world intelligence and soul in the universe. So much so, this world intelligence and soul give rise to the cosmos as an animated and living thing. The demiurge "found that . . . intelligence could not be present in anything which was devoid of soul. For this reason, when he was framing the universe, he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, that he might be the creator of a work which was by nature fairest and best" (*Timeaues*, 30B).

Some Observations about Plato's view of God

First of all, for Plato, and the other Greek philosophers, God is eternal but finite, not infinite. The reason for this is their belief that only Forms are real and all forms are finite. It was left to later Medieval philosophers to think of God as Pure Existence with no limiting Form (see Aquinas below).

According to Plato, God creates *ex materia* (out of something) not *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). The chaos is eternal, and God (the Former) is continually forming it according to the Forms that flow from the Form (the Good, *Agathos*). The Good (the Form) is not called God by Plato. The Greeks, unlike later Abrahamic philosophers (Jews, Christians, and/or Muslims), never identified God with their ultimate metaphysical principle.

The Good, Former, and World Soul form a Triad, but not a Trinity (three Persons in one Essence), as in orthodox Christianity. There is only one person there (The Former), and there is no common nature among the Triad. Further, the forms (Ideas) that come from the Form are not inherent in the Mind of God. The former get these forms by viewing the Form. When he beheld them in eternity past, he then overflowed with forms on the formless (chaos), forming it into the formed (cosmos). What is more, the World Former and Form operate as supreme in their own spheres. Finally, Plato's God did not create *matter ex nihilo.* Rather, he was more of an eternal sculptor eternally forming on an eternal lump of clay *ex materia*.

God is eternal but finite. He is eternally forming the cosmos which is in continual process. What is more, the World Soul is to the cosmos what a soul is to a body. This foreshadows the later dipolar view of God in Process Theology (see Alfred North Whitehead).

Also, according to Plato irregular motion is caused by matter. Matter is either evil, less than good, or that which hinders good, or causes irregular motion.

His View of Matter and Man

Contrary to the Judeo-Christian tradition which affirms that matter is good (Gen. 1:31; 1 Tim. 4:4), Plato held that matter is either evil or close to it. It is a drag on the soul which is good.

Plato's concept was Man *is* a soul and only *has* a body. This was later adopted by St. Augustine and passed on through the Middle Ages into modern Christianity. Forms of dualism legalism and asceticism (which involve denying the physical) flow from this. So, do mysticism and other-worldliness since the spiritual world is perceived to be more good and more real. For Plato the real world is the spiritual world of Ideas, We live in a world of shadows (see the Cave Analogy in *Republic*, Book VII).

In contrast to Plato, the Bible teaches a holistic view of human beings. We are a soul-body unity. The image of God (Gen. 1:27) includes the body. Genesis 9:6 forbids killing a human body since the humans are in bodily form and are made in the image of God. For Plato, salvation is salvation *from* the body. But to Christians salvation is *with* (*in*) a body. It is called resurrection. In Genesis God made man from dust (Gen. 2:7), and he will return to dust and later is to be resurrected from dust (John 5:28-29). For Greeks following Plato, this is ridiculous since the body is what the soul seeks deliverance from. Thus Paul was mocked on Mars hill because he spoke of the resurrection of the body (Acts 17:32).

The spirit world for Plato consisted of heaven, hell, and even a purgatory where some souls go awaiting their reincarnation into another body. Reincarnation is a punishment, and he warned that one who did evil "may come back as a woman, a kite, or a cow." Heaven is the place where one is permanently released from the body, lives in the realm of pure Forms and can behold the absolute Good, the Pure Form.

The Soul of Man

The soul is endowed with its own existence independent of the body's reality, regarded as a thing in itself above sensible change. (This notion of the soul was in accord with Greek tradition and the soul's previous philosophical constitutions: Anaximenesand Diogenes air, Leucippusand Democritus fire. But Plato considers these four "roots" as the primitive constituents of the sensible world.) However, Plato's idea of soul is represented as something above the changing sensible order. The body is only a housing for the soul where this soul's proper life is with the Ideas and unchangeableness Forms. This soul is immortal and indestructible, constituted of life and therefore excludes death. "For if the soul exists before birth, and in coming to life and being born can be born only from death and dying, must she not after death

continue to exist, since she has come to be born again?" (*Phaedo*, 77CD). The soul's immortality is established through a property known as self-motion: The soul through all her being is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal; but that which moves another and is moved by another, in ceasing to move ceases also to live. Only the self-moving . . . never cease to move. . . . But if the self-moving is proved to be immortal, he who affirms that self-motion is the very idea and essence of the soul will not be put to confusion. For the body which is moved from without is soulless; but that which is moved from within has a soul. For such is the nature of the soul" (*Phaedrus,* 245CE). The soul is never immortal of itself but is so only by the will of the demiurge.

Plato, writing in *Phaedo* in regards to his Friend Socrates about to enter into death, i.e., a better world, formulates a proof for the immortality of the soul. It is here in this narrative that Socrates has shown that the soul has existed prior to the existence of a man. He argues that since the Form has always existed then too the soul must always exist passing into the world of unchangeableness (whereas the body, a compound, does not always exist). In the *Phaedrus*, Plato bases the immortality of the soul on the soul as the self-mover. "The soul . . . which is ever in motion is immortal; but that which moves another and is moved by another, in ceasing to move ceases also to live. Only the self-moving . . . is the fountain and beginning of motion to all that moves besides. . . . But [if the soul] is unbegotten, it must also be indestructible; for if beginning were destroyed, there could be no beginning out of nothing, nor anything out of beginning; and all things must have a beginning. . . . But if the self-moving is proved to be immortal, he who affirms that self-motion is the very idea and essence of the soul will not be put to confusion. For the body which is moved from without is soulless; but that which is moved from within has a soul, for such is the nature of the soul. But is this is true, must not the soul be the self-moving and therefore of necessity unbegotten and immortal" (*Phaedrus*, 245-246).

There are three parts to the soul identified as a tripartite: the rational part (the good part based on reason which loves temperance and modesty), the courageous or spirited part , and the appetitive part (loving riotous and insolent behaviors). These three form the principles forms or functions of actions. He asserts this nature of the soul through the evident fact of the conflict found in the soul. It is the rational part that is fashioned after the Demiurge as ingredients of the World-soul while the mortal parts are made by

the celestial gods. (This dualistic conception of human beings reappears in Neo-Platonism, in Saint Augustine, and in Descartes.). Plato believed that man had a knowledge of standards and absolute norms that did not exist in the sense world; therefore, they must have had them in a state of pre-existence.

Plato's Answer to Parmenides

In defense of his absolute Monism, Plato argued that, to differ, things would have to differ by being or non-being. Non-being can be absolute, as in the Void or Empty Space of the Atomists. Plato disagreed, claiming that things could differ by relative non-being. That is, determination is by negation. We can only determine what something is by negating other things from it. He never solved the problem of how one can know not-that unless he knew what "that" was. Nor did he address how all knowledge is by negation since there are an infinite number of things one must negate in order to determine what something is. But it is impossible to make an infinite number of negations—at least in this life time. Hence, agnosticism seems inevitable.

How can something not be? How is it that something that is not the case be a true statement (or, how does one think that something is not, a negative proposition)? Parmenides concluded that what is not, is not anything, it is therefore not to be thought about or even mentioned, asking, What is it about nothing at all that can be thought about? Plato restructured Parmenides problem in order to address the issue. Plato's restatement was: How can things be truly or falsely denied to be so-and-so? Or, What is it to deny or affirm something? The "not," according to Aristotelian phraseology, cannot be attached to the subject of a truth or falsehood; but rather can be attached to what is predicated of the subject, i.e., statements can be negative but subjects cannot be negative. It is this addressing Parmenides problem that Plato was able to properly address the ideas of Forms.

His View on Ethics

Plato was a moral absolutist. The forms of good are eternal and unchangeable. We can know them, and we should live by them. He believed that the attainment of the Good is man's highest good. The highest good of man is the true development of man's personality as a rational and moral being, the right cultivation of his soul, and the general harmonious well-being of life. The distinct virtues are unified in prudence or the knowledge of what is

truly good for man and of the means to attain that good. Virtues are absolute and teachable.

There are four basic virtues: (1) Courage—bravery in spite of pain or pleasure to hold fast to reasonable judgments about what ought and what ought not be feared. (2) Temperance—orderliness and control of appetites by ones reason. (3) Wisdom—the form of knowledge that enables one to rule well his spirit and appetites. (4) Justice—the order brought about when each one does his own proper work without interfering with others. Plato believed all moral obligations were absolute (based on the Good), but had no way to resolve conflicts between different duties.

Two of Plato's works focus in on the issue of ethics, not only as it relates to the State but also as it relates to the individual person. These two works are titled *Plato's Republic* and *Laws*.

The intriguing question that bothered Plato throughout his life was: if society is corrupt because lawgivers are corrupt, is not the only hope to come out from under this is to place men in government who are not corrupt, those who have studied philosophy? To break the vicious cycle of evil there must be some good men who would devise a state that has citizens trained in virtue. Thus the art of governing is to be done by a ruler who governs for the sake of the governed. Without the constraint of the law, there would be no distinction between the just and the unjust. If one could do an impious act, would he not go ahead and do so and avoid what is called unjust? Would doing the right thing be pleasing? The central problem that the *Republic* shows is that justice is something that is found in the individual and in the Sate as well. Socrates attempts to accomplish this by showing that a state comes about out of natural needs against the opinion that it thwarts the individual.

Those just persons who are to protect the State, who possess the love of wisdom, (the philosophers), are to have the four virtues: wisdom (wise in actions), courage (right opinion as to what should and should not be feared), temperance (a man who is master of himself of the better over the worse), and justice (each man performing his own task for which he is best suited to do and in doing so desires to preserve the order of the State). (Wisdom and courage will then rule over the appetites which will lead to temperance.) The guardians are not only to possess these traits but the State as a whole is to have these qualities as well.

In Plato's *Laws*, he stresses the basic principles of the laws which must be presented as leading the citizens of the State to virtue. They must first respect the gods, next respect parents, followed by respect for one's self (soul first, then body) and respect for others. Though addressing his viewpoint on religion, Plato does argue that there is an essential truth in the universe where man is held to a higher principle whereby there are sanctions scrutinizing human conduct because the gods see all things. It is man's chief concern that he ascribes his own soul to the pattern set by and of the divine.

Concluding Remarks

Plato's philosophical outlook shows a deep need for personal belief in the providence of higher intelligences in regards to carrying out human affairs. No city-State can attain a high degree of culture unless its rulers pattern it after the Ideas. ". . . the statesman above all may be said to be divine and illumined, being inspired and possessed of God, in which condition they say many grand things, not knowing what they say" (*Menides*, 99BD).

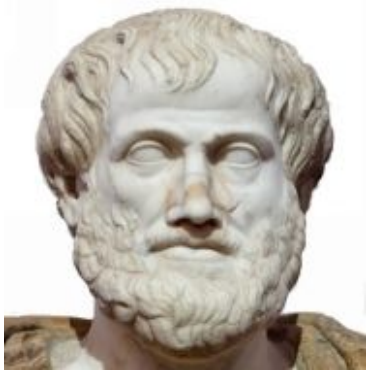
In sum, Plato's philosophy is directed to the care of the soul through the practice of virtue in the Greek city-State. The aim is to guide human conduct, both the individually and socially, according to the Ideas. Ideas is more than providing a dictate regarding moral conduct but also makes possible all scientific thought and communication, and to a greater extent, explaining the order found in the sensible world, though none of these can be fully understood at this time nor provide final answers to the deepest problems that are encountered. Plato's philosophy is an invitation to think but is not a ready-made system. His teaching was a powerful incentive towards normative rather than the rhetorical teachings of his predecessors devoid of causal knowledge. In the background of Parmenidean thought, this meant coupling the stable world of being to the ever seeming changing sense world.

Influences of Plato on Others

Alfred North Whitehead believed that the broadest generalization one can make about Western philosophy it that "it is a series of footnotes on Plato." His greatest influence was on his long-time student, Aristotle who was himself one of the greatest thinkers of all time. Another intellectual giant whom Plato influenced greatly was Plotinus, the founder of neo-Platonism. The early Christian apologist Origen was heavily influenced by Platonic

thought, as was Saint Augustine who was one of the top Christian thinkers of all-time. Through Augustine, Proclus, Boethius, and Dionysius, and later Bonaventura Platonic thought was introduced to medieval Christianity. Even the Aristotelian Thomas Aquinas did not escape the influences of Augustine. Add to this the Reformers and their followers, and the effects of Plato's thought come right on up to modern evangelicalism. Few person's outside of Moses, Jesus, and the apostle Paul can hold a candle to the influence of a non-Christian thinker like Plato, for both better and worse.

ARISTOTLE (C. 384/383 - 322/321 B.C.)



Background

Aristotle was Plato's greatest students and one of the world's greatest minds. His birth was shortly after the time of Nehemiah in the Jewish Scriptures. He was born around 384/383 B.C. and was the son of Nicomachus, a prominent physician of the Macedonian king, Amyntas II who also had involvement in the royal court. Aristotle was born in Stagira at Thrace, an entirely Greek colony whose dialect was Ionian (located on the north-east of the peninsula of Chalcidice), therefore he was Greek in origin. Because of his father's associations, Aristotle would have had access to men associated with the highest political circles in the Macedonian kingdom.

At seventeen (after he was left orphaned due to his father's death in his eighteenth year), he came to Athens and remained with Plato in his academy for twenty years (becoming his greatest student). Being greatly impacted by Plato's death in 347, he withdrew from Athens, and for the next three years stayed with Hermias the ruler of Atarneus and Assos (located on the coast of Asia Minor). Later, he went to Mitylene in Lesbos and there communicated with Theophrastus, who was later a disciple of Aristotle. In 343/342 B.C., he journeyed to the court of Philip of Macedon to become the tutor of Alexander (after Philip's assassination, Alexander took the throne at age nineteen). Eight years later, he returned to Athens around 335/334 to begin his own school, the Lyceum or Peripatos. Remaining there for twelve to thirteen years, he was involved in teaching logic, first philosophy, and giving public lectures. In 322/321 he went to Chalcis where he died shortly thereafter in his sixty-third year.

His Major Works

Aristotle was one of the most prolific authors in antiquity. His writings can be divided into the several categories which are not considered in chronological order. The first category is his popular writings of which three fragments of poems survive, fragments of certain letters, and other "exoteric writings"—those for those outside the school. In addition, there are the following: *Protrepticus, On Philosophy, On the Good, On the Ideas,* none of which have survived but are contained in numerous quotations from other later writers.

The second category is labeled the Memoranda. There are over 200 titles preserved in the three ancient catalogues of Aristotle's works. They are: *Constitution of the Athenians* (rediscovered in a papyrus in 1890), *Didascaliae, Problems,* and *Historia Animalium.*

The last category is the Scientific and philosophical treatises. Aristotle's writings continued to be standards in their field for nearly 1000 years, all the way up to the time of Galileo (1564—1642 B.C.). Contrary to wide-spread belief, Aristotle even believed the world was round, offering reasons for it. These works are sub-divided into five categories. The Logical works (the Organon) which are titled *Categories, On Interpretation, Prior and Posterior Analytics, Topics,* and *On Sophistical Refutations.* What is absolutely amazing is that each of these are not only the first major works known in the Western world on these topics but they are in world-wide distribution to this day well over 2400 years later! The Physical works which include the following: *Physics, On the Heavens, On Coming-to-be and Passing Away, Meteorologies.* The Psychological works known as *On the Soul, Parva Naturlia, On Memory and Reminiscence, On Dreams,* and *On Prophesying by Dreams.* Next are the works on natural history titled *On the Parents of Animals, On the Movement of Animals, On the Progression of Animals, On the Generation of Animals,* and others identified as the *Minor Treatises*. Lastly, there are the Philosophical works. These include the popular classic works called *Metaphysics, Nicomachean Ethics, Eudemian Ethics, Magna Moralia, Politics, Rhetoric,* and the *Art of Poetry.*

His Philosophy: Introduction

Because of his Platonic influence and background, Aristotle's treatises are primarily interested in promoting scientific knowledge, both of things that already exist and things that are to come into existence. Furthermore, his intent is to not only know the truth about things, but also basing human conduct, personal and public, on scientific knowledge. As a result, there is an indication by Aristotle of a threefold division of the sciences: (1) speculative (the first principle of what *in the thing* is truth and is already known), (2) practical (the first principle of the free choice of the agent to act, or the basis of conduct and course of action), and (3) productive (the first principles of an act by the producer, (*nous*) intuition or some capacity, concerned with things to be made).

The Order of Study:

First, identified as the "introductory sciences," is the process of human reasoning, or as Aristotle calls it, analytics. This is necessary preparation for further scientific undertakings in order for such knowledge to be acquired. Thus, the analytics is the science of thinking to be learned prior to studying the science of things themselves. The earliest Greek philosophers worked from intuition to intuition. Parmenides reasoned but without keeping aware of the process. The dialecticians and eristics used a process of reasoning but without the essential qualities of predication. Plato insisted on cognition of the common nature which knowledge thereby developed a division of thought without any reasoning activities. However, Aristotle introduced a rigorous scientific reasoning procedure using the role of logic. This reasoning process distinguished between equivocal (things called by the same name but have different definitions) and univocals (the definition and the meaning remains always the same). In addition, there were predicaments, which are predicated things that may be present in the subject. If they are not, they are called substances. This denotes the things that truly are in relation to things that may be. In contrast to substances, there is what are known as "accidents." Accidents are universal and are not predicable *of* anything whatsoever.

His Epistemology

Strangely, Aristotle and his beloved teacher Plato hold polar opposite views on epistemology (how we know). He spoke of three acts of the intellect: apprehension, judgment (predication) and reasoning.

Apprehension—The First Act of the Intellect (understanding):

By this act of the mind a subject (person) is able to apprehend or understand a thing, object, etc. The Subject of apprehension is a man (a rational animal), and the object is essence/form.

SUBJECT of Apprehension—Rational Animal by first act of intellect.

OBJECT or apprehension—Essence or Form of things.

METHOD of Apprehension—Abstraction of the universal from particulars.

MODES of Apprehension—The predicaments (the Categories).

The categories of apprehension are substance (what it is) and the nine Accidents (that inheres in a substance). Substance is divided into Primary Substance (the ultimate subject of all predication, namely, an individual) and a Secondary Substance (that which is predicable of everything in its class), namely, a universal (like humanness). Accidents are not substances but what inheres in a substance. The Ten Categories or modes of apprehending a substance are:

Substance—What, or the Subject of apprehension.

Predication—The Second Act of the Intellect. It is an assertion (affirmation or denial) about a thing, object, etc. Something may be predicate according to genus – man is an animal. But his rationality is a specific difference that makes him unique. In addition, man has the property "risibility" (ability to laugh) – animals can't laugh because they aren't rational and don't have a sense of the incongruity. A property is not of the essence but it does flow from the essence.

Predication involves several things:

(a) Subject of predication –rational animal by second act of the intellect.

(b) Object of predication- essence, form or Quiddity of a thing.

(c) Purpose of predication- definition or Nature or a thing.

(d) Means of predication- A proposition with a subject, predicate, and copula ("is").

(e) Modes of predication- <u>Predicables</u> (i.e., ways a predicate may be predicated of a subject). For example, when speaking of a man as--

"ANIMAL"- it is predication according to *Genus*- when a predicate gives a characteristic common to many.

"RATIONAL"- it is predication according to *Specific Difference*- when a predicate gives a characteristic distinctive to it.

"RATIONAL ANIMAL" it is

predication according to *Species*- when a predicate gives both, viz., the whole definition.

"RISIBILITY"-it is predication according to *Property*- when a predicate gives what flows from its essence but isn't a part of it.

"WHITE"- it is predication according to *Accidents*- when a predicate gives what inheres in the essence, but is not part of it.

(f) Quantity or extent of predication, Universal or Particular.

(g) Quality of predication- Affirmative or Negative.

Syllogism—The third Act of the Intellect

Syllogism, a form of the reasoning process which is composed of propositions called premises, from which together a proper conclusion could be drawn. Propositions may be universal or particular, positive or negative, necessary, impossible, or contingent. These reasonings or syllogisms are discourses in which certain things are stated (in the premises) that lead to a necessary conclusion. When this process reveals the cause as the cause and as a necessity, it is called the demonstration, showing the proper cause of the truth in the conclusion. This is the basis for Systematic theology. The Trinity is an example in orthodox Christianity—there is no single passage of Scripture that teaches there are three persons in one essence. Rather, it is a conclusion

that is derived from separate premises : (1) God is one in essence. (2) There are three persons who are called God. (3) Hence, it is reasoned that there are three persons in one essence in God—the conclusion. Thus, a syllogism is a rational deduction about a thing, object, etc.

There are three kinds of Logic: Deductive Logic, Inductive Logic, and Fallacious Logic. Deductive logic is of two kinds: there is Formal Logic (*Prior Analytics*) dealing with validity and Material Logic (*Posterior Analytics*) which treats truth. Inductive Logic (opinion)- deals with probability reasoning, induction (*Topics*). Fallacious Logic (invalid, false)- deals with incorrect reasoning (*Sophistical Refutations*).

Rational Empiricism

Unlike Plato, Aristotle believed that we are born a *tabula rasa* (a blank slate). There are no innate ideas. Thus, the content of all we know comes *a posteriori* from sense experience. Knowledge is described in terms of identity of the knower and thing known: "Actual knowledge is identical with its object: potential knowledge is the individual is in time prior to the actual knowledge . . ." (*De Anima*, III, 7,431a1-2). In the potential state things known are in the mind "just as characters may be said to be on a writing-tablet on which as yet nothing actually stands written" (*De Amina,* III 4,430a1-2). The mind then "is potentially whatever is thinkable, though nothing until it has thought" (Ibid., 429b30-31).

We had no pre-existence in a spiritual world as a soul before birth, as Plato believed. The sense, however, a trustworthy and reliable, and tells or informs us about the real world. The mind has the ability to abstract universals from particulars and know the real essence (form) of things. Each individual has his own agent (Active) intellect by which abstracts images from sensation. These ideas are stored in his passive intellect. But all ideas come from sense experience. We are born, however, with the innate ability to reason and think logically. Mind is shown to be separate from matter because it is not hindered by strong stimulation as in the case of the senses. The mind can think itself without thinking, also being able to attain essential characters of things and of the mathematical abstract (*De Amina,* 4,429a18-b22). However, Aristotle's doctrine on the mind requires the mind to be twofold: active intelligence, which is the immortal and part of the soul; and passive intelligence, which is

perishable and where life events on earth are erased (assumed after death) from the surviving mind. (Ref. *De Amina,* III 5,430a14-25).

Aristotle's Metaphysics:

Aristotle believed that we can know the real world; we can know being. The study of being as being is called metaphysics. There are several important concepts involved in knowing the real world. Nature is the totality of objects which are material and subject to movement. According to Aristotle, all natural motion is directed towards an end. This end sought in nature is the development from a state of potentiality to one of actuality—the embodiment of form *in* matter. Hence, the science and study of physics considers the mobility of things and mathematics concerns the quantity of things. However, as Aristotle states in *Metaphysics*: "We answer that if there is no substance other than those which are formed by nature, natural science will be the first science; but if there is an immovable substance, the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy, and the universal in this way, because it is first. And it will belong to this to consider being *qua* [in so far as] being—both what it is and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being" (*Metaphysics,* VI, 1. 1026a27 ff.). However, if immaterial substance is to be studied, then it is to be known through material substances. Each of these sciences considers immaterial "being," but none of them investigates being as such. This probing is what makes up *Metaphysics*. Thus, the order that must be followed in knowledge is just the opposite of the order of reality. Metaphysics is not only beyond physics but it is in a sense prior to physics. Metaphysics, or the primary philosophy, is concerned with things (objects, substances) that were beyond or outside the world of nature. Wisdom deals with the first principles and cause of all things, and is by the way the most exact of the sciences since it deals with these first principles. It is also thought that metaphysics is identical to theology. Aristotle's doctrine of metaphysics was his reaction to Plato's two-world doctrine, specifically, the doctrine of Ideas and Forms.

The Four Causes of Change. (two intrinsic causes and two extrinsic causes)

Aristotle addressed many aspects of change. These include the nature of change, the four causes of change, and how real change calls for the existence of an Unmoved Mover. He identified four causes that are necessarily associated with substances. The first two causes are considered intrinsic

(belonging to a thing by its very nature) and the last two are considered extrinsic (arising from some outside source). The two intrinsic are the formal cause and the material cause. The formal cause is that *of which* a thing is made, for example, the structure, form, or essence of a thing. The material cause is that *out of which* it is made. For example a chair is made out of wood. There are also two extrinsic causes: the efficient cause and the final cause. The efficient cause is that *by which* something is made (e.g., the carpenter who makes the chair). There is also a final cause or that *for which* something is made (its purpose). For example the chair is made to sit on. Later things explicated two more causes: an exemplar cause (that *after which* something is made, for example, the pattern or blueprint for the chair. Then there is the instrumental cause – that through which something is made (e.g., the tools to make the chair).

The Nature of Change in a Substance:

Unlike Parmenides who denied the reality of our senses, Aristotle believed that the change we sense in the external world is real. But change involves potentiality and actuality. For change is a passing from potentiality to actuality. Hence, everything that changes is composed of act (actuality) and potency (potentiality). There are two kinds of change: substantial change and accidental change. Substantial change is change in what something is, in its essence. This can happen by generation (coming to be) and corruption (ceasing to be). Accidental change is not a change in what something is, but change in what they have (e.g., change in size, shape, etc.). You have, not what you are. For example, we have knowledge, but we are not knowledge.

The nature of being is found only in one category: substance (*ousia*). To the categories, such as accidents, are called "being" because its influence on the substance. Privations and negations may also be called "being" because of their relations to the nature of being. However, the nature of being cannot primarily be located in sensible substance itself. Sensible substances are subject to creation and passing away. Even though substances are permanent relatively to accidents, these are not absolutely permanent. However, these substances do not come into existence nor pass out of existence either as form or matter. Matter is the substrate which remains the same through a change and the form is what appears in the process of the change (and of course privation is the absence of a particular form). Both form and matter already exist only as a potential. The creation or generation of a new substance is

when the potentiality becomes actualized as an existence of both the form and matter in a new concrete substance. Independent existing substances consist of matter (that *which has* form, for example, the human body) and form (that *which makes* something intelligible, for example, the human being as a rational being). The primary substance is always the individual concrete thing and as such is the subject of attributes in all of the categories. The specific essence is numerically different in each individual of the class but it is the same in all the individuals of the class. The individual is not predicated to others in the class. We cannot apprehend the universal unless we apprehend the individual.

Aristotle believed that change, the capacity to become something else, must be eternal because the nature of time excludes the possibility of time without change. If change is eternal, then the actuality which causes it must be eternal. Therefore, the prime mover(s) which caused the change too must be eternal and also immaterial. The prime mover(s) then must also be without matter (pure Form) and be free from change itself.

Material substances are products of change (decay, privation, generation, and degeneration) because they are a compound of matter and form and exist prior to accidents. Change is observed when a substance changes from one contrary to another (keeping in mind that contraries do not comprise the substance or change of anything). This change within the order of substance cannot be observed directly because what effects the change cannot be observed directly.

For Aristotle, the coming into being was a composite of form and matter. Material individuals cannot be defined as individuals because what is defined about them is essential to them. Therefore, the essence exists only in the individuals of the species. But when a determinate individual comes to be, there always has to be a cause for the generation of that individual (form and matter). Humanness is an abstract and can cause nothing. And man, being a universal is common to many. (However, the universal who determines man cannot himself be a universal or this would result in an infinite regress of universals.)

In the *Physics*, Aristotle went to great lengths to illustrate that whatever is moved is moved by another and that there is an eternal mover that

is the cause of first and regular continuous motion. This agent must have been exercising its causality. This he identifies as the Unmoved Mover.

An Answer to Parmenides.

Aristotle's response to Parmenides' Monism, which argued that things can't differ by either being (which they have in common) or by non-being (which is nothing), was to argue that things differ in their very being from one another. There are simply many pure Forms (gods) who differ from one another in their very being pure Forms. There were either forty-seven (according to astronomer Eudoxus) or fifty-five (according to astronomer Callipus) of these pure Actualizers (Forms) or Beings. A later insertion in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Book 12) noted that ultimately there could only be one God, but Aristotle apparently never came to this conclusion. However, since matter for Aristotle was the principle of differentiation (and they had no matter), it would follow that they could not differ. Aquinas later solved Aristotle's problem by noting there was an act/potency distinction in finite beings that enabled them to differ, whereas God was pure Act (Actuality). So, finite beings are complex beings, not pure Forms (like angels) with no bodies. So, finite beings can differ since they have different potentialities.

Aristotle's Proof for the Existence of God(s)

Aristotle offered a cosmological argument for the existence of God(s) beginning with the reality of change. He reasoned as follows; (1) Things change. (2) What changes moves from potency to actuality. (3) But potentiality cannot actualize itself. (4) Therefore, there must be Actualizers (47 or 55) that actualizes these changing things.

Unlike theists, these Causes were Final causes (not an efficient cause). Further, they were not infinite but finite since they were pure Forms and all Form has limitations. What is more, these ultimate Gods were not an object of worship. These Gods (Forms) had no religious significance. They were simply causal explanations for the motion or change in the cosmos. These Gods are a pure (Platonic) Forms with no matter. They are an uncaused Cause (and unmoved Movers). They are not personal or loving. These Gods are to the universe as a magnet is to iron or the moon is to the tide. They cause by "pulling" (like a final cause) and not by "pushing" like an efficient cause. Like Plato, for Aristotle creation is eternal, not temporal. It was *ex materia*, not *ex*

nihilo as Jewish, Christian, and Muslim philosophers were later to argue (see Aquinas below).

His Anthropology

Human beings are composed of form (the formal cause) and matter (the material cause). This soul-body unity is called hylomorphism (hylo—matter; morphism—form). Since Aristotle did not believe in the immortality of the soul, the soul does not survive death and, hence, the form/matter unity is destroyed at death. So, one's parents would be their efficient cause and one's final cause is happiness—happiness in this life which is living according to reason and virtues (see "ethics" below). Things constituted by nature are those that have within themselves their principle of motion and rest, for example, animals, plants, earth, fire, air, and water. Everything that "has a nature" or is "by nature" is in the category of substance. Form is the actuality of substance while the matter is only the potency of the substance. Therefore, matter and form are the two intrinsic causes of a sensible substance. Natural things, constituted of the form, more properly the nature of the matter because it is the actuality, and matter, which constitutes its potency, are accordingly two-fold. In man, there are the two intrinsic causes: matter, the efficient cause, and form, the formal cause.

The notion of the soul, the vital principle in endowing things with life, is "a substance in the sense of the form of a natural body having life potentially within it" (*De Anima,* a19-21). This means that the soul and the matter that it informs are not two different substances each complete in its own order, as the Platonic and all previous Greek conceptions of soul and body would imply, but that together they constitute only one substance, the living body. The soul is the cause and principle of the living body as a source of its movement as the final cause and yet as the real substance (the formal cause) of animation of the body. To inform and constitute a body, then, is the very nature of a soul. In no sense could its presence in the body be described, according to this doctrine, as "unnatural." Rather, separate existence for a soul would seem unnatural and impossible. The soul is the first principle for it is essential form "by or with which primarily we live, perceive and think" (*De Anima*, II,2, 414a12-13).

Later, orthodox Christians held that God was the efficient cause of our coming to be and our parents were only an instrumental cause. Our final cause

is to glorify God, or to be united with Him in the Beatific Vision wherein they reach the blessed state of seeing God face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). The exemplar cause was the God in whose image they are made (Gen. 1:27).

Other Influences of Aristotle

Aristotle has had an enormous influence on Western thought since his time. Few philosophers alive today will be anything more than a footnote in someone's thesis. However, in most fields, except the physical sciences, Aristotle's influence continues almost unabated now some 2300 hundred years later. His works are translated in most major languages and continue to be used world-wide. Despite the fact that Aristotle was a non-Christian philosopher who did not believe in a theistic God, miracles, or even an afterlife, his views still continue to have a lasting effect on Christian thinking in many ways. Consider the following:

First, it is well-known that one of the greatest Christian philosophers of all time, Thomas Aquinas, adapted much of Aristotelian thinking to express the Christian Faith. Aristotle's basic literal hermeneutic again stands at the core of the orthodox understanding of the Bible since the time of the Early Creeds to the present.

Second, even Martin Luther, more often a defender of Augustine and the Platonic tradition, borrowed the literal hermeneutic of Aristotle to defend his Reformation principles.

Third, Aristotle's defense of the basic laws of logic (foundationalism) still stands at the basis of much of philosophical thinking, even to modern times.

Fourth, despite the rise of modern agnosticism about reality, Aristotle's belief in the knowability of the real world (realism) has an undaunted strain in modern thought.

Fifth, Aristotle's belief in the origin of our ideas in sense experience has been confirmed in many ways by psychology and modern philosophy.

Sixth, his strong emphasis on the ability of human reason in approaching the world stands firm after all attacks, including post-modernism

(see Jacque Derrida).

Seventh, Aristotle's defense of objective truth and the correspondence view of truth is accepted not only by evangelical thinkers, but even by many atheists (cf. Ayn Rand).

Eighth, his defense of the validity of the human senses in discovering truth is at the core of not only everyday life, but of philosophical and common sense realism. Indeed, even those like the Skeptic David Hume and the Christian Gordon Clark who deny the reliability of their senses, nonetheless, trust their senses daily to provide reliable information for the preservation of their life. Indeed, even those who believe that the Bible, not their senses, is their starting point in the Christian world view, nevertheless, trust their senses when they are reading the Bible.

Ninth, despite strong attacks by modern skepticism, agnosticism, and post-modernism, Aristotle's metaphysical quest to know the real world remains a strong emphasis in contemporary thought.

Tenth, Aristotle's explanation of real change involving actuality and potentiality is still the most viable alternative to the annihilation/recreation view of process theology. This is to say nothing of the value of his substance/accidents distinction, the four causes, and many other important distinction.

Finally, Aristotle's argument for the existence of God, restated in the contemporary context, is still the basis of strong forms of the cosmological argument. Even recent convert from atheism, Anthony Flew, listed Aristotle's argument as one of the most convincing in coming to his newly found belief in the existence of God.

His Ethics

Aristotle's ethics is concerned with action, not as being right in and of itself irrespective of other concerns, but rather what is conducive to man's good what is the "good" will be the "right." "Every act and every inquiry, every action and choice, seems to aim at some good; whence the good has rightly been defined as that at which all things aim" (*NE*, 1094a1-3). Aristotle sets out to discover what this "good" is and asserts that it is social or political

science that corresponds to it. Through his study, he is attempting a pure *a priori* and deductive ethic that accounts for moral virtues that seem to be universally characteristic in human nature in spite of his Greek influence.

The Aristotelian ethic is based upon the first principles of habituation. This habituation, based on deliberation and choice, not passion, is seen as the conformity of certain actions with the routine received through a correct education, beginning at a young age, and not through an intuition in existing things (assumedly, mankind). Through this habituation, one chooses the kinds of actions or life in which one locates the highest good. The good for man is generally agreed to be "happiness." The good is "that for whose sake everything else is done." There are two kinds of good: Good by reason of another and Good in itself. There are two kinds of virtue: intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtues include: philosophy, science, and art, wisdom and understanding. Moral virtues include: courage, temperance, and justice. These higher goods are in part determined through friendships where "[p]erfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other qua good, and they are good in themselves. Now those who wish well to their friends for their sake as most truly friends; for they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; . . ." (*NE*, VIII, 3,1156b7-12). This first principle is called *eudaimonia*—the notion of being well directed by a superior *daimon* or preternatural power. It consists in using the intellect in contemplation of its highest object, the good, and is acquired by knowledge where one sees that "this is right" and "this is wrong" without knowing the reasons scientifically. Aristotle develops his *Ethics* through the highly expressed traditional Greek precepts of "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess" in order to direct human conduct to its proper end. It is apparent that the Aristotelian ethic is this-worldly. It is an ethic that is adapted to the outlook of life in a Greek city-state.

The ultimate goal for the ethic is the ultimate human supreme good. This good can only be found in the life of the Greek city-state. The political science behind the workings of the city-state is to acquire knowledge of the first principles in order to make men good: ". . . it legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from, the end of this science must include those of the others, so that this end must be the good for man" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 2,1094a28-b7). However, this goodness is not something that corresponds to one single idea; in other words, it is not something that appears identical to all instances like whiteness appears in snow. Goodness is an object

that varies and is seen useful in pleasure, honor and wisdom. The *eudaimonia*, or the highest human good is "activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue" (*NE*, I, 13,1102a5-6). Thus, it is the study of the political science that requires a study of virtue in order to distinguish its two aspects: some virtues being intellectual, like philosophical wisdom, and others being moral, like liberality with temperance. However, these moral virtues come through habitation, performing acts of virtues, rather than being innately inherent. These habitations then produce a proper balance of temperance associated with natural appetites, a right perspective of justice in the distribution of possessions, and actions being sustained by proper courage.

While some acts are morally good or bad themselves (like murder). Generally, morally virtuous act avoid the extremes of defect or excess. They are "the golden Mean." For example, Courage is mean between fear and confidence. Temperance is the mean between pleasure and indulgence. Justice is the mean between unfair or unequal extremes. Pride is the mean between vanity and humility. And generosity is the mean between stinginess and wastefulness.

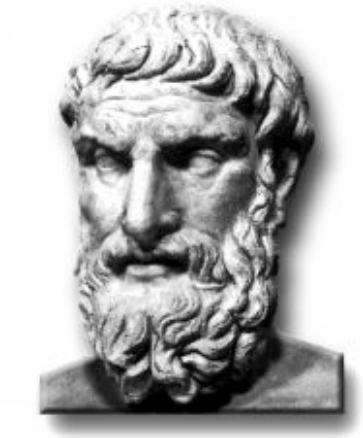
A Contrast between Plato and Aristotle

Plato and Aristotle are not only the greatest Greek thinkers but they are two of the greatest philosophers the world has ever seen. It is amazing that two great thinker so close in time and thought for so many years, one being the teacher of the other, could be the fountainheads of two almost completely different schools of thought. The following chart stresses the differences between Plato and Aristotle:

	Plato	**Aristotle**
God	An Efficient Cause Only one God	A Final Cause Many unmoved movers
Knowledge	It is innate Begins in the mind Gained by recollection	It is not innate Begins in the senses Gained by abstraction

Universals	Exist in themselves Universals known intuitively	Do not exist in themselves Universals known through particulars
Truth	Is correspondence to Forms Is about eternal things	Correspondence to facts Is about temporal things
Methodology	Dialogical Truth occasioned by things	Deductive Truth known through things
Immortality	Soul is immortal Dualism of soul and body Soul survives death	Soul is not immortal Hylomorphic unity of soul and body Soul does not survive death
Morality	Absolute basis for it God and immortality are essential We act for eternal good	No absolute basis for it God/immortality not essential We act for temporal goods
Wisdom	Divine gift Comes by revelation Must be virtuous to be wise	Natural endowment Comes by reason Need no virtues to be wise
Happiness	An act of the will Found beyond this world	An act of the mind Found in this world
Future	Optimism about it Spiritual destinies	No optimism about it No spiritual destinies

EPICURUS (C. 341 - 270 B.C.)



Background

Epicurus lived between 342/341 and 271/270 B.C. His place of his birth is unknown even though he was brought up in Samos and was considered a citizen of Athens through his parents. He began his philosophical studies at an early age at the hands of followers of Plato and Democritus. While at Samos, he listened to Pamphilus, a Platonist, then Nausiphanes a follower of Democritus. At the age of eighteen, he went to Athens to fulfill his two-year civic duties. In 321, he went to Colophon to study for ten years. At the age of thirty, he set himself up as a teacher at Mytilene to later transfer to Lampsacus where he taught for an additional four years. In 307/306, he acquired a home in Athens and founded the Epicurean community (and school) known as the Garden. Epicureans were called garden philosophers because the met in the garden.

His Major Works

He wrote about 300 works, most of which have been lost. His surviving works are: *To Herodotus; To Pythocles; To Menoeceus,* and *On Nature* [a fragment].

There are three extant letters containing summaries of Epicurean doctrine. They are called Diogenes Laërtius' *Life of Epicurus, To Herodotus* (on the atomic theory)*, To Pythocles* (on astronomy and meteorology)*,*and *To Menoeceus* (on ethics)*.* Diogenes preserved a collection of forty *Kuriai Doxai*

(Cardinal Tenets). Epicurus' other writings, now lost, include the following: *Symposium* (a dialogue), *On the Gods, On the Highest Good, Canon* (on the criterion of truth), and most important of all, *Peri Physeos (On Nature)*. Fragments of *On Nature* have been recovered from the charred remnants of an Epicurean library at Herculaneum, buried in the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

His Epistemology

Epicures' point of departure was the incontestability of immediate experience. Sense data are "true" because they are the ultimate evidence to which all questions must be referred; Hence, to question them is to make life impossible. His theory is called "canonic" knowledge, arising as it did from sense experience.

Epicurus was not interested in dialectic or logic nor did he value scientific inquiries. Therefore, Plato and Aristotle's *reason* plays no part in the Epicurean Canonic doctrine. He considered mathematics useless. He reasoned that mathematics geometries points, lines, and surfaces could not be a substitute for sense-knowledge. Epicurus claimed that this sense-knowledge is the fundamental basis of all knowledge: "If you fight against all your sensations, you will have no standard to which to refer and thus no means of judging even those sensations which you pronounce false" (Diogenes Laërtius, 10, 146). Epicurus held to the infallibility of sensation. Error is not a result when properly seeing an object, nor by hearing or the use of any other sense. Error only results when from improper judgment. Every sensation, proposes Epicurus, "is devoid of reason and incapable of memory; . . . for all our notions are derived from perceptions, either by actual contact or by analogy, or resemblance, with some slight aid from reasoning . . ." It is the preconceptions, or universal ideas stored in the mind, that lead the senses to make a right opinion about the external object that is presented. Thus before making judgments about objects, there first needs to be a preconceived notion about the object in order to make a right judgment.

The canonic criterion (knowledge based on sensations, perceptions, and feelings as a standard of truth) takes place when images of objects penetrate the sense-organs. When images stream continuously from the same object and enter through the sense-organ, perception is achieved in the narrow sense. (This is compared to images that pass through the pores of the body

which become mixed up.) In either case, an image is perceived from an objective cause. Next, the concept of the image is placed in the memory such that when one hears the name of an object the image appears in the mind/memory. Finally, there is the "feeling" criteria. Epicurus says that "the criteria of truth are the senses, and the preconceptions, and the passions" (Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Philosophers*,10, 31). These feelings can be manifested in two states: either pleasure or pain, one favorable and the other hostile towards happiness. This Epicurean criterion focusing on pleasure and the avoidance of pain for a happy life underlies the hedonism of Epicurus. However, it must be noted, that this hedonism is not promoting a surplus of bodily goods and sensual pleasures. Rather it means a life contented with minimal simple provisions for the necessities of life. True pleasure is higher than those experienced by the body and becomes that for which one consciously strives.

His Metaphysics

Epicurus was an atomist and a materialist. The infinite supply of atoms moving in infinite space and time has formed every possible combination, however rare. Everything possible is somewhere actual. Nothing proceeds from nothing, and nothing passes into nothingness. This foreshadowed the modern (mis)statement of the First Law of Thermodynamics: "Energy can neither be created nor destroyed."

As for Greek polytheism, there is nothing to prevent the existence of innumerable gods, for the gods are compounded of atoms, situated in the intervals between the universes and living forever in a state of supreme bliss. The gods are anthropomorphically conceived, and are like mankind in appearance, and breath and eat as we do.

Epicurus took over the atomist doctrine of Democritus, but with minor changes in the details. In addition, Epicurus states that nothing can come into being out of what is non-existent—being cannot come to be, being cannot cease to be; what is are bodies and the space in which they are and move. Following the doctrine of atomism, he claims that there is nothing other than bodies and space, which has always existed, where these bodies are an infinite conglomeration of atoms filling the void. This world of "collisions by chance" was promoted rather than a world of intelligence that was endorsed by Anaxagoras and Aristotle. Thus, the ultimate elements of the sensible universe

are atoms. “Now the universe whole is a body; for our sense bear us witness in every case that bodies have a real existence; and the evidence of the senses, as I have said before, ought to be the rule of our reasoning about everything which is not directly perceived. Otherwise, if that which we call a vacuum, or space, or intangible nature, had not a real existence, there would be nothing in which the bodies could be contained, or across which they could not move, as we see that they really do move. Let us add to this reflection that one cannot conceive, . . . any general quality peculiar to all beings which is either an attribute, or an accident of a body, or of the vacuum” (Diogenes Laërtius, 10, 39-40). In the beginning, these atoms of varying size and weight, indivisible and infinite in number, rained down through the void. Colliding into one another, the first crashes began the process. These spontaneous movements of individual atoms created rotary movements resulting in the formulation of innumerable worlds separated by empty space. Thus is the same for man. Like all other atomic compounds, he came into being after the necessary conditions were met, denying any creator nor planned destiny.

According to Epicurus, the gods are anthropomorphically conceived, both male and female are composed of atoms and are in appearance similar to mankind who eat and breathe as such. Epicurus proposed that these gods were established because of their universal acceptance and hypothesized that their existences had an objective purpose. Epicurus’ physical theory was tended towards a practical end—freeing man from the fear of the gods and the afterworld, giving men peace of soul. Though he did not deny the existence of god(s) he intended to show that they do not interfere in human affairs, therefore man does not need to petition these “superstitious” beings.

His Ethics

The good life is attainable only by the good philosopher. One needs intelligent choices and practical wisdom. Practical wisdom measures pleasures against pains, accepting pains that lead to greater pleasures and rejecting pleasures that lead to greater pains. Justice, temperance, and courage are among the traditional virtues, which are the means for attaining the pleasant life.

The popular “Epicurean” notion of “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die” is a later distortion of the thought of Epiciurus. He is said to have lived a moderate life.

Epicurus warns against the accepted view of the gods where they are vindictive, angered by man's misconduct or pleased by virtuous activities. His doctrine promotes that death is neither good nor evil because things can only be sensed when one is living. Instead, pleasure is the beginning and the fulfillment of a happy life where life itself is the fundamental good. Each pleasure is good in and of itself. Life's goal is to achieve freedom from pain and worry. In this pursuit, *ataraxy* (peace of mind) is where happiness consists. Epicurus made pleasure the end purpose of life. ". . . we affirm that [refined] pleasure is the beginning and end of living happily; for we have recognized this as the first good, being connate with us; and it is with reference to it that we begin every choice and avoidance; and to this we come as if we judged of all good by passion as the standard . . ." (Diogenes Laërtius, LP, 10, 129).

Even though the Epicurean ethic seemed fundamentally egocentric, based on the individuals pleasure, in practice, it was not quite the case. The ethic promoted pleasure associated with doing acts of kindness to others. "He who desires to live tranquilly . . . ought to make himself friends . . . enjoying the advantages of friendship in all their fullness . . ." (Diogenes Laërtius, 10, 154). Friendship was greatly stressed in the Epicurean ethic even though it was on an egoistic basis for personal advantage. One has an unselfish affection towards his friend that is based upon his own love for himself knowing that without friendship man cannot live a secure and tranquil life.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STOICS

The apostle Paul encountered both Epicureans the Stoics on Mars Hill (Acts 17:18), though of a later variety. The roots of Stocisim can be traced back to Zeno (c. 336/335—315/313 B.C.) of Citium on Cyprus. He came to Athens about 230 B.C. and first made association with the Cynic, Crates. Some twenty-seven works are associated with Zeno through Diogenes Laërtius, therefore, much reliance of his doctrine must be on later writers. Sources of Stoic doctrine are limited and indirect. For this reason, Stoicism must be spoken of when attempting to ascertain common tenets of the school.

It was customary to view Stoics as primarily interested in the ethical through subordinating logic and physics and to see how these played a role in the acquisition of virtue. This would lead one to believe that they rejected Platonic and Aristotelian doctrine that stressed contemplation as the goal of philosophy. The resultant comment is that their logic and physics did not account to much towards the Stoic doctrine. However, when logic is considered, there were some differences among the early Stoics. Aristotle, a pupil of Zeno, held that the sole business of man was to pursue virtue where logic is used in its furtherance, but only as a therapeutic function; so, in practice, logic did more harm than good. On the other hand, Zeno urged the study of logic (as long as it was not abused in its application through trickery in didactics). Thus, the Stoics did see logic as a true part of philosophy and not simply as an instrument.

The Stoic Criterion of Truth

The theory of knowledge precedes any concern with the other parts of logic. Things that are comprehended are produced by real objects; and real objects are things that are comprehended. Therefore, sensation is always true; representation is sometimes true and sometimes false. In a sense, the Stoics would say that when a man is born his soul is a sheet of paper suitable for writing. Things coming through the senses are first written down. By the time is of the age of seven, all rational reason is said to have received all its preconceptions. Knowledge then is viewed as a passive reception on the part of the knower. Truth and falsity are a result of an ascent to these representations.

The View of Physics

The Stoic doctrine of physics rests on two principles of the universe: the "agent" and the "patient." The "agent" is the active reason inherent in God and the patient is unqualified passive reality, i.e., matter. God is not looked upon as something extrinsic but rather is an element of it, the world soul, pervading the universe, though located elsewhere, say, in the heavens. The Stoics seem to be accepting the Platonic notion of reality as set forth in the *Sophist*.

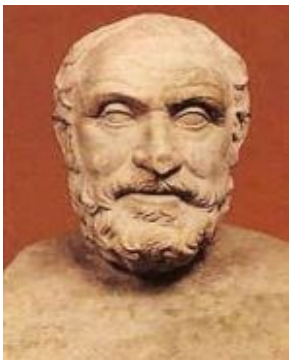
Stoic View of Ethics

The World Soul (God) is an analogy with the human soul. The materiality of the human soul is proven by noting that it is affected by the body and is spoken of as fire (or breath) diffused through the body making it as one subject. Likewise, the human soul is a part of the universe. Notwithstanding, the Stoics did have a moral philosophy that was to be an influential of their doctrine.

The goal though of life was conduct that brought happiness achieved by virtue and rational activity. Happiness is sought because of it being a natural impulse. The Stoic ideal of virtue though provided little room for emotions and passions which were thought to be contrary to nature. Emotion was a result of wrong judgment, not as a persuasive precluder.

The Stoics stressed the importance for each adherent to bring himself into the conformity with the will of God which was equated with the course of the cosmos. Stoicism seemed to demand that one assent to the rule of fate creating a general climate in which the rational activities of man were to consist of conformity with the law of nature. These demands made the individual pursue the ideal of virtue as a matter of social consequence, elevating moral conduct and identifying the Stoic as an ideal citizen. Some claim that the Stoics allowed suicide, not as an escape, but as an expression over one's circumstances. It was supposedly permitted to avoid doing something that was considered unlawful, or to avoid poverty, or when there was illness of the mind, all were cited as reasons for the allowance of suicide. This is different from Socrates taking the Hemlock as a form of capital punishment for his alleged crimes against the Athenians. However, even Plotinus (see below) allowed for suicide in extreme cases (see Ennead I, 9).

PYRRHO (C. 360 - 270 B.C.)



Background

Pyrrho lived between 360 and 270 B.C. He dwelt in the city of Elis on the Greek Peloponnesus. He is said to have studied philosophy under Bryson, the sophist, and Euclid of Megara. There is little question as to the indication that he studied with Anaxachus and Democtitean. The various cultures and customs and ideas he experienced while on his journey with Alexander the Great are thought to have had their influence in his philosophical position. He journeyed with Alexander the Great as a court philosopher and traveled with his armies into India, where he is said to have met and been influenced by the ascetic, morally exemplary Gymnosophists and Magi. He was the first great skeptic. The synonym for skepticism "pyrrhonism" is named after him. He was a student of Anaxarchus, and the city of Elis made him a high priest. Pyrrho returned to Elis around 330 BC at the age of thirty-five to open his philosophical school.

His doctrine through his writings are difficult to understand because it is based on later writers, forcing a reading back into his teachings. His teaching was only through oral discourse but his views are known through his pupil Timon of Philus (c. 320-230 B.C.) who is called Sextus Empiricus

His Epistemology

Pyrrho believed that human reason cannot penetrate to the inner substance of things; we can only know how things appear to us. In this he foreshadowed the modern agnosticism of Immanuel Kant who said we cannot know the real world, only the world as it appears to us. We cannot be certain

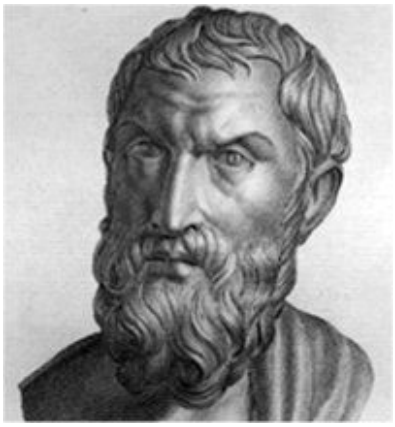
of anything, and the wise man will withhold judgment. The main principle of his philosophy *acatalepsia*, which means the ability to withhold assent from doctrines regarding the truth of things.

Pyrrho is claimed later by the Skeptics as their founder. Pyrrho taught that things do not differ from one another: they are equally uncertain and indiscernible. Our sensations and resulting judgments can neither produce truth or falsity thus negating any trust in either of these. The same things appear differently to different people and therefore we cannot know what is right such that opposing with a contradictory assertion cannot be determined. Therefore, we cannot be certain of anything and thus we should hold our judgment. Rather than saying "this is so" we should say "it appears to me." What "seems to us" is merely a phenomenon and is therefore not a test for infallibility. Rather, it is best to strive for "no opinion," choosing neither side or its contrary, neither affirming nor denying. For against every statement its contradiction may be offered with equal justification. In view of this, it is necessary to preserve an attitude of intellectual suspense in which no assertion can be known to be superior to another. In applying these principles Pyrrho believed that nothing can be known but one could have a proper attitude *ataraxia*, or freedom from worry. The result then is apathy (*ataraxy*) or a suspension (*epoche*) of judgment, i.e., universal indifference. Consequently, reality is unknowable. What was the intended purpose to Pyrrho's position? It seemed as though it was a way of producing a peaceful and happy life. If one had to act, then let this be in such a way as to follow the customs of that time and place.

His Metaphysics

He had no view of ultimate reality except that it cannot be known. Pyrrhro believed that philosophy should teach men to dispense with elaborate dialectic and should cause them to seek, above all, to make themselves morally and psychologically independent of both philosophical methods and external things. Pyrrho promoted indifference to things in the moral order. This meant for him that in being and truth there is nothing definite to human cognition; allowing no sensations or opinions giving rise to truth or falsehood. This refusal to rely on any power of human cognition disabled anything to be known as it is. All other things, even life or death, were indifferent, placing the eternal nature of the good above the vicissitudes of extrinsic things and happenings.

LUCRETIUS (C. 99 - 55 B.C.)



Background

Lucretius lived from between 100—90 to about 55—53 B. C. His full name was Titus Lucretius Carus. From internal evidence of his works, it can be inferred that he was a Roman of good family and education. He was known for his tranquil disposition. He was a trained Latin poet/philosopher. He was a Materialist who studied in the Epicurean school.

Known as the author of didactic poem, probably unfinished, was the work titled *De Rerum Natura* "On the Things of Nature." Historically, *De Rerum Natura* expressed the Epicurean philosophy where his chief aim was the liberation of men from the fear of the gods and death, and the leading of them to peace of the soul. His poem was the fullest and most coherent and influential system of materialistic philosophy produced in classical antiquity, an exposition that may have made Epicureanism familiar to multitudes of readers who might otherwise scarcely have heard of it. There is some originality to his thought that cannot be traced to any earlier thinker. He stayed to the Epicurean emphasis on sense perception as the foundation of knowledge. He also wrote on the philosophy of history.

His Philosophy

Lucretius held that all knowledge comes form sense images emanating from physical objects. He promoted the doctrine that teaches all knowledge is derived from sensations, which are caused by the impact of "images," or "surface films" that are emitted from external objects onto the mind-atoms

located in the human breast. “If a belief resting on this basis is not valid, there will be no standard to which we can refer any doubt on obscure questions for rational confirmation” (I, 422-423; cf. IV, 469-521). He was more mechanistic than his master (Epicurus) and was focused on constructing a working model of the universe in which there was no place for anything that could not be seen and handled. Being a materialist, he believed that only atoms exist in regular but purposeless motion. As a materialist, he affirmed that Nature creates all things and give life. However, he does substantiate the Epicurean atomic “swerve” (the movement of atoms curved and colliding with other atoms) because “[i]f it were not for this swerve, everything would fall downwards like raindrops through the abyss of space. No collision would take place and no impact of atom on atom would be created. Thus nature would never have created anything.” Therefore, he concluded that nothing can come from nothing. Hence, all is eternal.

Though he shared in the Epicurean theology, he did not take part in the devotion of the traditional Greek gods. The Romans did not adhere to traditional Greek mythology but rather adopted the state religion. Though Lucretius found no relief of pent-up spiritual emotion through traditional Greek or Roman religions, he did have some devotion to Nature as creator and life-giver. He spoke of gratitude to Nature, both as the giver of good things and as a teacher of true wisdom and justice. “Nature” worship was an integral part of his philosophy. He is a witness to the fact that it is possible to investigate natural phenomenon with no religious inhibitions and to explain them on purely materialistic lines, rejecting divine purpose, providence, and the immortal soul, without sacrificing the joys of reverence and adoration. As for religion, it a superstition based on fear. There is no immortality. Death is nothing, and fear of nothing is no fear at all.

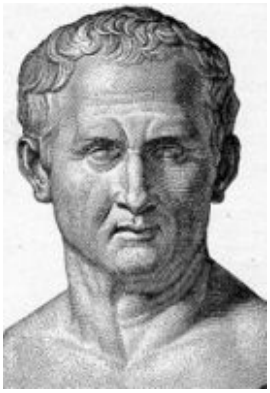
He was more admired as a poet rather than a philosopher because his Epicurean philosophy conflicted with the prevailing Stoicism and Platonism of the ruling class. Later generations of Christians showed no interest in Lucretius.

His Contribution to Sociology

Probably his greatest contribution to philosophy has been his sociology (though it was not so named until Auguste Comte’s time). Greek philosophers agreed that the basis of human society was articulate speech. Accordingly, no

question was more disputed than whether the origin of language was “natural” or “conventional.” Lucretius argued that while speech must have originated in physical reaction, as natural as the instinctive cries of animals, the association of specific sounds to specific objects was the result of a long process, partly causal coincidence and partly agreement among the members of a community. He argued that the essential step in the development of the community was the growth of “natural justice” where he defined it as “a bargain for mutual profit not to hurt or be hurt.” (This also serves to explain the occurrence of such a compact along Darwinian lines, as an example of the survival of the fittest; communities that failed to achieve it must have perished like those ill-equipped forms of life.)

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO (C. 106 - 43 B.C.)



Background

Cicero dates from 106—43 B.C. He was a Roman orator and statesman. In his youth, he was a pupil of Phaedrus the Epicurean, Philon the Academician, Diodotus the Stoic, Antiochus of Ascalon, and Zeno the Epicurean, The Peripatetic Staseas, and the Academics Philo and Antiochus. In Rhodes, he listened to the teaching of Poseidonius the Stoic. He spent some years of his life in public and official activities to then later return to philosophy. He was the most celebrated Roman eclectic.

His Major Works

Most of his writings were dialogues. His writings can hardly be considered original in content, as he openly admits, but he did have the ability of presenting doctrines of the Greeks to the Roman readers in a clear style. He claimed his writings were copies ("apographa") in his famous letter to Atticus (May 21, 45 B.C.). He brought into union philosophy with rhetoric criticizing Socrates, who was blamed for their separation. His writings from the later years: the *Paradoxa,* the *Consolatio,* the *Hortensius,* the *Academica,* the *De Finibus,* the *Tusculana,* the *De Natura Deorum,* the *De Senectute,* the *De Divinatione,* the *De Fato,* the *De Amicitia,* the *De Virtutibus* the *De Republica,* the *De Legibus*.

His Philosophy

He was inclined to skepticism about many things. However, he believed the intuitions of the moral consciousness are immediate and certain. Though he was unable to argue scientifically against Skepticism, he did turn to the study of moral consciousness. He saw danger in Skepticism's doctrine of morality and concluded rather that moral concepts proceed from nature where general agreement to this is found. His only point of agreement with them was that virtue is sufficient for happiness but rejected the notion that happiness was found in external goods as well.

His Metaphysics

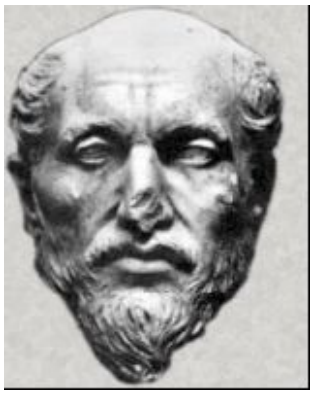
He was interested in the proof of God's existence from nature and rejected the doctrine of atheistic atomism. He believed that the popular religion should be preserved in the interests of the community, but it should be purified from gross superstition and the practice of attributing immorality to the gods. He also thought that belief in Providence and immortality of the soul should be preserved.

His religious viewpoint considered the benefits of popular religion preserving the interests of the community at large while simultaneously purging any gross superstitious practices that attributed immorality to the gods. Preserving belief in Providence, the immortality of the soul, and human fellowship are to emphasized.

His Ethics

Cicero had a humanistic ideal. He used the union of rhetoric and philosophy to try to construct this. Moral concepts proceed from our nature (Natural Law). Virtue is sufficient for happiness. He stressed the ideal of human fellowship. The highest human achievement lies in the effective use of knowledge for the guidance of human affairs. Philosophy and the specialized disciplines supply the knowledge and rhetorical persuasion makes it effective. So, in order for one to be the most influential, he advocated the liberal education that had an emphasis on philosophy.

PHILO (JUDAEUS) OF ALEXANDRIA (C. 20 B.C. - A.D. 40)



Background

Philo was a direct contemporary of Jesus the Christ (4B.C.?—A.D. 33). He flourished between 20 B.C.—A.D. 40. He was the son of a wealthy Alexandrian family where he was educated in both Judaism and Greek philosophy. In AD 40, he was sent as head delegate to Emperor Caligula to rectify the wrong the Gentile population did against the Jews. He was considered the first Jewish Hellenistic Philosopher. He was a Jewish philosopher born into a wealthy Hellenistic Jewish Family in Alexandria, Egypt. He attempted to explain Judaism in the light of Platonic philosophy and to revise Platonic philosophy in the light of Judaism.

It was in Alexandria, later becoming the center of Jewish-Hellenistic philosophy, and to a much lesser extent, in Palestine itself, where Greek influence appeared on the Jewish mind. These Orphic-Pythagorean traits were seen in the sect of the Essences, as recorded by Josephus, a contemporary Jewish historian. Except for the staunch traditions of the orthodox Jews pushing back, Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to force Hellenization on the Palestinian Jews. Because the Jews at times were further from the mother-land's influences, they were more naturally prone to accept Greek philosophical influences, reconciling Greek conjectures with Jewish theology. This was evident in the harmonization of the two teachings and a practice of allegorizing Jewish Scriptures in harmonizing Jewish teaching with the Greek philosophy. It will be seen that Philoism later helped pave the way for Neo-Platonism through its insistence on the Transcendent Being, existences of intermediary beings, and the soul's ascent to God culminating in ecstasy.

His Writings

His Writings in English are found in: The Loeb Classical Library trans. by F. H. Colson (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); H. A. Wolfson, *Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Chritianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); *Selections from Philo,* ed. by Hans Lewy in *Three Jewish Philosophers* (NY, 1960).

His main writings centered on philosophic discourses of certain Hebrew Scriptures. On one hand they were attempts to interpret Scripture in terms of Greek philosophy. On the other, his attempts were made to revise Greek philosophy in light of scriptural traditions. Many of his works have survived though some have perished.

His View of God and Creation

Philo believed that God is a self-existing, eternal Being without the world. The Platonic Ideas existed eternally in the Mind of God. God also created these ideas as real beings at creation. So, these ideas existed as a Mind (Nous) which Philo called Logos in two stages: eternally before the world and then temporally when God created the world. Unlike the Greek philosophers, Philo did not believe that matter was eternal but that God created it freely *ex nihilo*. As an all-powerful Being, God could destroy the world if He wished (but He does not wish to do so).

Philo determined as the most compatible scriptural teaching to philosophy was Plato's conception of a God who existed from eternity —a being over and above the corporeal world. Philo aligned with Plato's eternal "ideas" because he held that there was scriptural support for the "ideas." Philo justified Plato's *Timaeus* with scriptural tradition by giving the "ideas" a twofold stage of existence: (1) ideas existed as thoughts of God, (2) ideas were created by God prior to the creation of the world. He labeled this the Logos.

However, Philo could not hold to the doctrines of Plato that pre-existing matter existed eternally. To him there were two creations: the pre-existing matter out of nothing and the creation of the world out of this pre-existing matter. Philo, again comparing Plato's idea in *Timaeus* of the world being willfully created by God, however, follows the scriptural conception of the creator God being a freewill agent concluding that God could have equally

chosen to create, not to create, or create another kind of cosmos and likewise can equally destroy the world at will.

His View of the Logos

Philo's concept of the Logos was not that the Christian Logos (Jn. 1:1, 14) who was the eternally equal Second Person of the Trinity who became flesh in the Virgin born Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, for Philo, the Logos was inferior to God and placed in a rank among many other beings beside the Logos. The Philonic Logos is distinct from the Second Person of the Trinity in that It is a subordinate and intermediary being, among others as well, and limited in powers, through which God expresses Himself. His view was more Neo-Platonism than Christian. Some writers wrongly believe that the concept of Logos of the Gospel of John and found in 1:1 was borrowed from Philo because there are some similarities: both are the image of God and both are the means of God's governance of creation. However, this overlooks many crucial differences:

Philo's Logos	John's Logos
Not God	Is God
Not Personal	Is Personal
Did not Assume Flesh	Did Assume Flesh
Not Object of Faith and Love	Was Object of Faith and Love
Did not Live and Die on Earth	Did Live and Die on earth

His view of Providence and Miracles

Philo's understanding of God as a freewill agent is extended to his idea of world government where the concept of causality and certain natural laws as being implanted by God in the world. However, God does have the power to infringe upon His natural goings-on; these then being categorized as non-arbitrary miracles wisely designed for the good of mankind. For Philo, God governs the whole universe by intermediary causes and laws. God can and

sometimes does infringe on these laws by supernatural acts. God's providence is both general (overall) and particular (over each thing).

His View of Human Nature

Human rational souls preexisted prior to the creation of their bodies. Some souls become embodied (called humans) and others not (called angels). Souls are immortal but not intrinsically (as Plato), only by God's will. Rational souls have a will that is externally free from compulsion (like Greeks held). But it is also internally free of compulsion (unlike most Greek philosophy). Because of the Platonic influences on Philo, he maintained a distinct dualism between soul and body, between the rational and sensual elements of man. He claimed that virtue, though produced through trusting in God in order to be "like Him" rather than trusting in oneself, was the only good whereby man must liberate himself from the power of the sensual.

His Epistemology

Philo maintained that the same truth can be found in both Greek philosophy and in the traditional Jewish Scriptures. He did not intend to destroy the Jewish scriptures but rather to reconcile them with Greek philosophy. He believed that the Greek philosophers had made use of the Jewish scriptures but yet at the same time promoted an allegorization of texts. Even though God is personal, Pure Being, absolutely simple, free and self-sufficient, Philo concurred that He was thus an indefinably unspeakable Being: "In order to comprehend God we must first become God, which is impossible" (*Fr*. A 654). Therefore, God can only be attained through ecstasy or mystical intuition.

Human knowledge, according to Philo, is both natural or supernatural. Humans know both naturally (innately) and supernaturally. Natural knowledge is indirect (by reason); the supernatural knowledge is direct (by revelation). God revealed things supernaturally to the Old Testament prophets. However, only God's existence, not His essence, can be known. Natural knowledge is associated with sensation leading to a logical conclusion. This supernatural knowledge is under the direct supervision of God and is divinely or "prophetically" revealed where God is exercising His providence over individuals. Man can only know "about"God through an indirect way cosmological proofs—or directly through divine revelation—flashes

upon the mind. However, these ways only provide knowledge of God's existence not of His essence, which, according to Philo, cannot be comprehended by His creatures. We can only identifying Him as "unnamable," "ineffable," and "incomprehensible. God's essence is understood through its likeness to other things in terms of genus (its general kind) and species. According to Philo, the only to properly speak about God is through negative terms, a way to compare him as unlike other things even though the scriptural descriptions are in a positive formation. All positive properties ascribed to God refer only to His actions, not to His essence (following Plotinus). Hence, God's essence can only be described in negative terms (*via negativa*).

Human Government

God rules the whole universe, including human affairs. God rules among men through divine law (theocracy or theonomy, though Philo did not use these terms). God has divinely implanted natural law into the world for its governance. Philo, arguing against the idea of "law" formulated by Plato and Aristotle, proposed that the best form of law is based upon a divinely revealed fixed law whereby every individual has a primary allegiance to God and His revealed law. Thus, human law functions as an instrument of the application of law ultimately under the rule of God. Philo called it a "democracy" but in fact, it could be called a "theocracy" or "theonomy." Strangely, Philo calls this "democracy" by which he mean that each citizen should be treated equal according to the law.

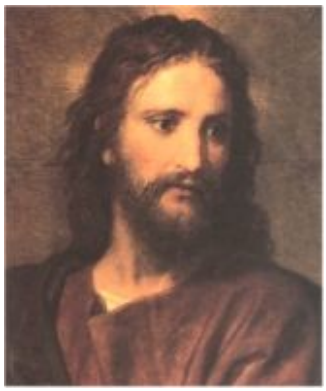
His Ethics (The Virtues)

Philo agrees with Aristotle that virtue is the mean between two vices. To the traditional natural virtues, he adds two supernatural ones: faith and repentance. All virtue will be rewarded either in this life or the next one. Philo contends that man's actions are in-between that of complete virtue and complete wickedness—always in a state of improvement. He maintains though that there are some, only by God's grace, who may be born of a thoroughly sinless nature.

His Philosophy of History

History is not cyclical as the Greeks held. History has a linear movement—it headed for a final Goal (in the Messianic kingdom). Western historians have followed this model. Based on Philo's belief in God and his position regarding freewill, he maintains a theo-telelogical philosophy of history where the cyclical changes in human history are guided by "the divine Logos" according to a preconceived plan pointing towards a particular goal which is to eventually be reached. This future plan will reveal a city under the best of democratic politics. This concept coincides with his view of government. Philo's ideas were based on his understanding of the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah and Micah.

JESUS CHRIST (C. 4 B.C. – 33 A.D.)



Background

Jesus Christ was the most influential person in the history of Western thought. The rest of ancient and modern thought after his time has had to deal with his legacy. He left no writings behind, but his immediate followers, called apostles, and their associates wrote the twenty-seven books known as the New Testament between the years of about 50 and 100 A.D.

His Life

According to a reputable first century historian, Doctor Luke, Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the King of Judea between about 8 and 4 B.C. He began his teachings in 29 A.D., during the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Lk. 3:1). He lived, taught and worked wonders (miracles) for either two and a half of three and a half years. He died either in 29 or 33 A.D. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea east of Jerusalem (Lk. 1). He was raised in Nazareth as a carpenter's son. He was not formally educated, though he was knowledgeable enough that by age twelve he impressed even the Jewish teachers in Jerusalem (Lk. 2).

Jesus' parents, Joseph and Mary, were devout Jews. He had several "brothers and sisters" which some take as his half-brothers or step-brothers. Other take them to be his cousins. Up to the time of his adulthood, they did not believe his claim to be the Messiah (Jn. 7). At one point early on some of his own people thought he had lost his mind (Mk. 3:21-22) and came to carry him away. His mother Mary, who testified that he was virgin born (Mt. 1) was

convinced of his divine origin, and at least some of his brothers became believers after his resurrection (1 Cor. 15: Jude 1:1).

Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. According the Gospels and the Epistles, the tomb was found empty three days later and Jesus appeared to over 500 disciples on twelve different occasions over the 40 days (Acts 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:1-8). He ascended to heaven and promised to return to earth from the very Mount of Olives from which he ascended (Acts 1:10-11). Christianity grew immediately and rapidly as a result of the testimony of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection.

Even according to early non-Christian sources, the following is known about Jesus and his earliest followers.

The Teaching of Jesus

According to Jesus' immediate followers, Jesus was a Jewish Monotheist . He believed he was the predicted Jewish Messiah of the Old Testament and the Son of God who was the only way of salvation for mankind.

His View of God

Jesus believed there was only one God (Mk. 12:29), the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God who appeared to Moses (Mt. 22:32). This God created the world (Mk. 13:19) and mankind (Mt. 19:4-5). Yet he also claimed to be God himself (Jn. 8:58; 10:30), the same One who appeared to Moses in the Old Testament (Ex. 3:14). He accepted with blessing Peter's confession that he was the Son of God (Mt. 16:16-18). He listed himself with the Father in the baptismal formula (Mt. 28:18-20). He spoke of the eternal glory he had with the Father before the foundation of the world (Jn. 17:5). He assumed the authority of God for his words (Mt. 24:35). He accepted worship due only to God on numerous occasions (Mk. 5:6; Jn.9:38; 20:28; Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:23; 15:25; 28:9) and never rebuked anyone. Indeed, on two occasions he commended persons for recognizing his deity (Jn. 20:29 cf. Mt. 16:17). And he blessed Thomas for calling him "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28). He spoke of himself as "the Lord" to whom David referred in Psalm 110:1 (Mt. 22:43).

His View on the Messiah

Jesus believed in the Old Testament declarations about the Messiah being God (Psa. 110:1; Isa. 9:6; Isa. 7:14; Psa. 45:6; Psa. 2:7). Indeed, Jesus claimed to be that Messiah. "The woman [at the well] said to Him, I know the Messiah is coming. . . . Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He'" (Jn. 4:25-26). His response to John the Baptist's inquiry as to whether he was the Messiah was a tacit claim that he was (Mt. 11:2-6). Under oath, the high priest said, "'Are you the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the blessed?' And Jesus said explicitly, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest said, 'what further need do we have of witness? You have heard the blasphemy!'" (Mk. 14:61-62). When he was crucified, the inscription on his cross read: "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (Jn. 19:19).

His View of God's Providence

Jesus believed in a personal God who had providential care over all his creation. He clothed the lilies and fed the birds. He knows the number of hairs on our head. God cares for (Mat. 6) and answers their prayers (Luke 18:1-8). He bid his disciples to address God as our "Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 6:6).

His View of How We Know God

Jesus spoke of knowing God through his Word (the Old Testament Scripture) (Jn. 5:39) which he viewed as every "word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). He called them "the Word of God" and words that "cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He said God's word was imperishable (Mat. 5:17-18) and exalted above all human teaching or tradition (Mt. 15:3-5). It was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Mat. 22:43) who spoke through his prophets (Luke 24:27) about Christ (cf. Luke 24:44; Jn. 5:39).

As for how we could know that God has spoken through his prophets and through Jesus His Son, Jesus offered miracles as proof. He said, "That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he said to the paralytic—I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home" (Mk. 2:8-10). He told the Jews that his death and resurrection would be a miracle to prove who he was (Mt. 12:40-42). Likewise, when John the Baptist asked if

he was the Messiah, he told John's disciples to return and tell him of all the miracles he was doing. Indeed, the Jewish Rabi teacher said to Jesus, "Rabi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs [miracles] that you do unless god is with him" (Jn. 3:2).

Jesus also believed that God spoke though his creation in general revelation to all men. He often turned to nature for lessons (Mt. 6). He spoke of reading the signs in the sky (Mt. 16:2-3). Indeed, the Old testament Jesus often quoted and claimed to fulfill spoke of "the heavens declaring the glory of God" (Psa. 19:1). Jesus agreed with Moses who wrote of the condemnation of the heathen who did not live up to God's moral standards (Lev. 18). His disciples, whom Jesus taught, spoke of the moral law which was "written on their heart" (Rom. 2:12-15) and nature which taught them of the existence and goodness of God (Acts 14, 17).

Jesus also offered predictions as a proof of his claims. He often referred to his fulfillment of Old Testament predictions about Himself (Mt. 24:25; Jn. 14:29). He also offered repeatedly the prediction of his own resurrection as evidence of this claims (Jn. 2:19-21; 10:17-18; Mt. 17:22-23).

His View of Salvation

Jesus taught that God loved the world and send His Son to die for them (Jn. 3:16-18). He claimed that he came "to seek and to save those who were lost" (Lk. 19:10). He believed there was no salvation other than through his sacrificial death which he freely did so that all could be saved (Mk. 10:45; Jn. 10:17-18). When asked how to go to heaven, he replied: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes unto the Father except through me". He added, "Whoever does not believe [in him] is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (Jn. 3:18). Jesus claimed to be the only "door" (gate) by which anyone can get into heaven (Jn. 10:9). Anyone who attempts to come any other way is "a thief and a robber" (Jn. 10:1). His apostles added, "Neither is their salvation in any one else for there is no name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

His View of End Time Events

Jesus had a linear view of history, believing that during the end-times there would be terrible times, with wars, famine, and pestilence (Mt. 24:6-8) . At the end of this "great tribulation" Jesus predicted that he would return in power and great glory (Mt. 24:29-311). After this he would set up his kingdom on earth, reigning on a throne with his twelve apostles reigning on twelve thrones over the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28) for whom he promised the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6-8).

Works on the Philosophy of Jesus

There are several writings on Jesus' philosophy. Pat Zuckeran and I wrote *The Apologetics of Jesus*. Peter Kreeft wrote a book titled *The Philosophy of Jesus*. Douglas Groothuis produced a good work titled *On Jesus* which also discusses Jesus' philosophy. Numerous great thinkers such as St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, Soren Kierkegaard, and many others have based their thinking on the teachings of Jesus. Even many non-Christian thinkers acknowledge that Jesus was a great teacher.

EPICTETUS (C. A.D. 50 - 138)



Background

The dates for Epictetus were from about A.D. 50—130. He was first a slave belonging to Nero's bodyguard. After becoming a freeman, he continued to live in Rome until the expulsion of the philosophers by Emperor Domitian (A.D. 89 or 93). He had been freed after the death of Nero. He later founded a school at Nicopolis in Epirus and probably continued it until his death. While at Nicopolis, Flavius Arrianus attended Epictetus' lectures and thus composed eight books based on these lectures along with catechisms of Epictetus. Epictetus was a man of great sweetness and lived very simply. He was a man of personal simplicity, humble, charitable, and especially loving towards children. He was presumably lame much of his life. He was possessed of great moral and religious intensity. He did not publish anything. His writings are preserved through his disciple Arrianus in the *Discourses* and the Enchiridion.

His Philosophy

He believed that primary conceptions are common to all men. That is, all men have the sufficient initial moral intuitions on which they can build up the moral life. Epictetus insisted that all men have a capacity for virtue because God has given to all men the means to be happy and steadfast in character and self-control. In addition, all men have sufficient initial moral intuitions on which can be built a moral life. However, he also states that philosophic instruction is necessary for all in order to apply the concepts of good and evil to particular circumstances since conflict arises in their applications. It is here where diversity of ethical views is identified. Therefore,

education, based on reasoning on logic, is necessary in order to rightly apply the principles associated with these concepts.

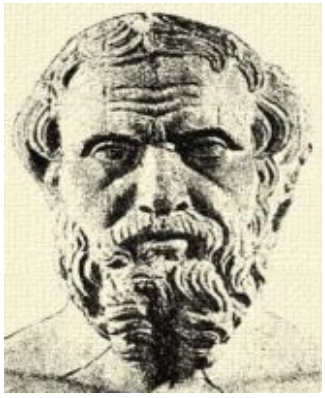
He believed that all events should be viewed as God's gifts. Epictetus does point out that though one may be able to apply these moral intuitions and where wealth, honor, health, and favor may be evident, this does not depend solely on the efforts of any individual man, but he must relinquish to the idea that Fate as the will of Divine God has played a part. Man must accept all events without rebellion or discontent because it is Divine Will. However, man can control his will and the judgments of events based upon the learnings through education. "The essence of good and evil lies in an attitude of the will . . . [for] the will may conquer itself, but nothing else can conquer it" (*Disc.* I, 29). What is necessary for man is to *will* virtue and *will* to conquer sinful acts. "Now will you not help yourself? . . . You must talk to yourself. You will be most easily persuaded; no one has more power to persuade you than yourself" (*Disc.* 3, 2).

His Ethics

To progress practically, Epictetus advises daily examination of the conscience, the avoidance of bad companions and occasions of sin, perseverance, and constant self- awareness. In order to accomplish this, three stages are required: 1) tranquility resulting from proper desires according to right reason needs to be taught; 2) right action and performance must be taught; 3) making the first two stages secure, moral judgment must be produced. Therefore, all men have the capacity for virtue and God has given to all men the means of becoming happy. Man's nature is to do good. It is possible to produce unerring moral judgment through proper education. This echoes Plato's belief that to know the Good is to do the good.

The life of the young man must be of physical cleanliness and order, temperance, modest, chaste, simplistic, true piety, and with no pursuance towards wealth. Atheism and a denial of the Divine Providence are both to be condemned.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS (C. A.D. 160 - 210)



Background

Sextus Empiricus specific year of birth and death are unknown. However, he is placed in the latter half of the second century and first quarter of the third century A.D. His dates are c. A.D. 160—210. Place of birth and death is also unknown. He seems to have been a Greek because he knew Athens, Rome, and Alexandria with some certainty. He learned much from the empiricist doctor Menodotus of Nicomedia. He headed a school of Skepticism. He may have been a medical doctor.

His extant works include the only lucid, complete, and firsthand summary of Greek Skepticism available to us. These are divided into two works, *Pyrrhonism (Hypotyposes)* [divided into three books: the first defining key terms of skepticism, the other two make use of these terms to attack dogmatism (especially those of the Stoics). This is an attack on the validity of the syllogistic proof. Sextus attempted to show that the syllogism is an example of a vicious circle, since the truth to the conclusion must already be known if the truth of the major premises has been ascertained.] and *Against the Dogmatists (Adversus Mathematicos)* [contains eleven books, five of which refute philosophers (logicians, physicists, and ethicists), and six used to refute scientists (grammarians, rhetoricians, geometricians, arithmeticians, astronomers, and musicians).] He was the last of the Pyrrhonic writers. His writing was in plain, clear, prose style.

His Epistemology

Sextus Empiricus was a skeptic and was credited with codified Greek Skepticism. He was the head of the Skeptic school and is the primary source of the skeptic school in general. His attack on the Stoicsmakes him a source for Stoic writings as well. Skepticism is distinct from dogmaticism the metaphysics of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus because the skeptic does not claim to have certain knowledge of hidden or non-evident things, as the dogmatist does. The skeptic suspends judgment on the question of whether knowledge is possible. He refused to recognize any one belief as being more probable than any other. He did not believe that a strong inclination or assent should accompany any of our beliefs. Sextus Empiricus held that Skepticism is distinct from the academic philosophy of men like Carneades and Clitomachus, because these men asserted that (1) knowledge is impossible, (2) some beliefs are more probable than others, (3) a strong inclination can accompany some of our (more probable) beliefs, and (4) probability should be our guide to living. The skeptic suspends judgment on whether knowledge is impossible, refusing to recognize any one belief as being more probable than any other.

Metaphysics

The motivating force behind skepticism is the attaining of unperturbedness, *ataraxia*; the ultimate goal of happiness, peace of mind in the day-to-day activities (as compared to the Stoics and Epicureans who were striving for pure theoretical knowledge) by lack of conflict between opposing ideas or forces. He believed that when we realize that "reason is such a trickster," we find peace. The first stage towards *ataraxia* is antithesis: where mutually contradictory claims appear equally probable (or improbable) through the method of arguing. The second stage is the suspension of judgment following the awareness of antithesis. Instead of asserting to, or denying, any one of the claims relative to the subject at hand, they are put together and shown to be mutually inconsistent, thus withholding judgment on each and all of them. Hence, the last stage, unperturbedness, *ataraxia,* follows. Sextus Empiricus refused to doubt phenomena and called this the "doctrinal rule" of Scepticism. The rule stated that one must live with appearances, that is, in accordance with sense experiences, one's physical needs, and the customs and laws of one's country. Only by this method could the *ataraxia* of epistemological doubt be realized.

EARLY CHRISTIAN THINKERS (C. 2ND AND 3RD CENTS. A.D.)

Background

Although Christianity came into the world as a religion of revelation and redemption, it became apparent even in apostolic times that it was necessary to defend itself against both theological and philosophical attacks. St. Paul viewed his own mission as one "in the defense and confirmation of the gospel" (Phil. 1:7). St. Peter urged the early Christians to be ". . . ready always to satisfy everyone that asketh you a reason (*apologia*) of that hope which is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15). At the same time, the apostles gave strong warning against "the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor. 1:20f). He said, "Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy, and vain deceit; according to the traditions of men" (Col. 2:8). It was with these two sets of admonitions that the early fathers took up the task to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3), and it was one or the other of these exhortations that they stressed in their approach. On the one hand were those that appreciated philosophy and used it to give "a reason of the hope within them." On the other hand were those that feared the contamination of Christianity by the "wisdom of this world."

Those Who Appreciated Philosophy

There is evidence that Christianity appealed to intellectuals from its very beginning. St. Paul himself was well educated (Acts 26:24), as was his companion Dr. Luke (Col. 4:14). One of the first Athenian converts to Christianity was one Dionysius, a philosopher to whom Paul spoke on Mars Hill (Acts 17:34). In the second century, there were other names: Athenagoras (c. A.D. 177), Marcianus Aristides (c. A.D. 140), Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 100—164), Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150—219) and others. Of these who viewed philosophy with some favor, the last two are more important.

JUSTIN MARTYR (C. A.D. 100 - 165)



Background

Otherwise known as Flavius Justinus, Justin Martyr was born of pagan parents and became a Christian after he had studied Stoicism, Peripateticism, Pythagoreanism, and Platonism. After engaging pagan philosophers as a Christian apologist, he was martyred in Rome about A.D. 165.

Justin's Commendation of Philosophy

He held that Christ, the Logos, was known by the Greeks who lived according to reason, writing: “And those of the Stoic school—since, so far as their moral teaching went, they were admirable, as were also the poets in some particulars, on account of the seed of reason [logos] implanted in every race of men—were, we know, hated and put to death. . . . For, as we intimated, the devils have always effected, that all those who anyhow live a reasonable and earnest life, and shun vice, he hated. And it is nothing wonderful; if the devils are proved to cause those to be much worse hated who live not according to a part only of the word diffused [among them], but by the knowledge and contemplation of the whole Word, which is Christ.”

He further stated that Socrates, Heracletus and other Greek philosophers, sometimes called "atheists," were really Christians: “We have been taught that Christ is the firstborn of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably [*meta logou*] are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heracletus, and men like

them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and many others. . . . So that even they who lived before Christ, and lived without reason, were wicked and hostile to Christ, and slew those who lived reasonably" This would seem, then, to be a somewhat incongruous view of faith and philosophy. If philosophy was sufficient, what, then, was the need for Christianity?

Justin's Reservations about Philosophy

However, a closer examination of his Apology reveals that he has some serious reservations about philosophy. Consider the following: "First, not all of ancient philosophy is good, according to Justin. He wrote: "We know that the wicked angels appointed laws conformable to their own wickedness, in which the men who are like them delight; and the right Reason, when He came, proved that not all opinions nor all doctrines are good, but that some are evil, while others are good."

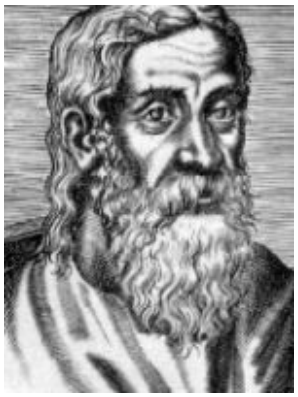
Second, Christianity is superior to ancient philosophy. Our doctrines, then, appear to be greater than all human teaching; because Christ, who appeared for our sakes, became the whole rational being, both body, and reason, and soul. For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Word. But since they did not know the whole Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves. In like manner, he says, "And our doctrines are not shameful, according to a sober judgment, but are indeed more lofty than all human philosophy."

Third, Justin's trust was in Christ not Socrates, in Christianity and not philosophy. "For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine, but in Christ, who was partially known even by Socrates (for He was and is the Word who is in every man. . . .), not only philosophers and scholars believed, but also artisans and people entirely uneducated, despising both glory, and fear, and death; since He is a power of the ineffable Father, and not the mere instrument of human reason." This leaves us with a somewhat paradoxical picture. On the one hand, philosophy seems to be the essence of Christianity, and, on the other hand, Christianity has superiority over philosophy. Are not these views diametrically opposed?

Summary and Conclusion

Like other early Christian fathers, Justin Martyr believed that the truth of Greek Philosophy was borrowed from the revelation of Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Plato's statement in the *Timaeus* that Christ was placed "crosswise in the universe" was borrowed from Moses' brazen serpent story. Furthermore, the Greeks had the truth only partially and dimly, whereas, Christianity has it completely and clearly. Christianity is superior, not because the teachings of Plato are different from those of Christ, but because they are not in all respects similar, as neither are those of the others, Stoics, and poets, and historians. For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic word (the word disseminated among men, James 1:21), seeing what was related to it. However, they who contradicted themselves on the more important points appear not to have possessed the heavenly wisdom, and the knowledge which cannot be spoken against. Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us. For next to God, we worship and love the Word who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God. . . . For all the writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted word that was in them. For the seed and imitation imparted according to capacity is one thing, and quite another is the thing itself, of which there is the participation and imitation according to the grace which is from Him. One cannot deny that Justin appreciated philosophy. However, it is not fair to assert that he thereby deprecated Christianity. Nevertheless, it is true that he highly estimated reason and did not always systematically relate it to faith.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (C. A.D. 150 - 211/215)



Background

Titus Flavius Clement was probably born at Athens but later moved to Alexandria around A.D. 150. where he studied at the platonic Christian school there. Late around 180—201 he was head of the school when Origen was his pupil. Clement labored to show the true *gnosis* (knowledge) as opposed to the false claims of Gnosticism.

The Apparent Rationalism of Clement

It would appear that Clement was even more rationalistic than Justin Martyr. His most famous quote was: "Accordingly, before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration. . . . perchance too philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring "the Hellenic mind" as the law, the Hebrews, "to Christ." Philosophy therefore was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ." He added elsewhere, his belief in the inspiration of the Greek poet: "Let the Sibyl prophetess, then, be the first to sing to us the song of salvation: . . . where in remarkable accordance with inspiration she compares delusions to darkness, and the knowledge of God to the sun and light, and subjecting both to comparison, shows the choice we ought to make."

He eulogized Plato saying, "I seek after God, not the works of God. Whom shall I take as a helper in my inquiry? We do not, if you have no

objections, wholly disown Plato. How, then, is God to be searched out, O Plato? For both to find the Father and Maker of this universe is a work of difficulty; and having found Him, to declare Him fully, is impossible." He not only praises Plato but other philosophers who uttered inspired truth. "And let it not be this one man alone—Plato; but O philosophy, hasten to produce many others also, who declare the only true God to be God, through His inspiration, if in any measure they have grasped the truth. For the knowledge of God, these utterances, written by those we have mentioned through the inspiration of God [viz., Plato, Xenophon, Cleanthes, Pythagoras], and selected by us, may suffice even for the man that has but small power to examine into truth." He adds, "Are you amazed, then, to hear that men who belong to the nations [heathen] are sons in the Lord's sight?"

Furthermore, Clement seems to identify the content of philosophical "truth" with that of "the truth" Christ claimed to be in John 14:6: "We merely therefore assert here, that philosophy is characterized by investigation into truth and the nature of things [this is the truth of which the Lord said, "I am the truth"]; and that, again, the preparatory training for rest in Christ exercises the mind, rouses the intelligence, and begets an inquiring shrewdness, by means of the true philosophy, which the initiated possess, having found it, or rather received it, from the truth itself."

Finally, he declares that "by reflection and direct vision, those among the Greeks who have philosophized accurately, see God." Such lofty exaltations of philosophy demanded on his part an explanation of certain apparent scriptural negations of human wisdom, which he did by claiming that Paul does not disparage philosophy; but deems it unworthy of the man who has attained to the elevation of the Gnostic, any more to go back to the Hellenic "philosophy," figuratively calling it the "rudiments of this world," as being most rudimentary, and a preparatory training for the truth.

He insisted that it is evident that the apostle, by availing himself of poetical examples from the phenomena of Aratus, approves of what had been well-spoken by the Greeks; and intimates that, by the unknown God, God the Creator was in a roundabout way worshipped by the Greeks.

Justin wrote, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and via deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." He believed that Paul was not branding not all philosophy, but

the Epicureans, which Paul mentions in the Acts of the Apostles, which abolishes providence and deifies pleasure, and whatever other philosophy honors the elements, but places not over them the efficient cause, nor apprehends the Creator.

Furthermore, he declared: ". . . let those who say that philosophy took its rise from the devil know this, that the Scriptures say that "the devil is transformed into an angel of light." When about to do what? Plainly, when about to prophesy. But if he prophesies as an angel of light, he will speak what is true. . . . Philosophy is not then false, though the thief and the liar speak truth, through a transformation of operation." There seems to be such clear documentary evidence of his heterodox position, that no further passages need be examined.

Clement's Reservations about Philosophy

However, in Clement's defense he believed in the superiority, finality, and necessity of Christianity. This is evident from many things he said.

First of all, he believed in the sole authority of the Scriptures as the criterion for all truth, as is obvious from this passage: "He then, who of himself believes the Scriptures and voice of the Lord. . . . is rightly [regarded] faithful. Certainly we use it as a criterion in the discovery of things. What is subjected to criticism is not believed till it is so subjected; so that what needs criticism cannot be a first principle." He adds elsewhere, "For the highest demonstration, to which we have alluded, produces intelligent faith by the adducing and opening up of the Scriptures to the souls of those who desire to learn; the result of which is knowledge (*gnosis*)."

Second, he conceived of philosophy's purpose as preparatory for Christ. He wrote, "But if the Hellenic philosophy comprehends not the whole extent of the truth, and besides is destitute of strength to perform the commandments of the Lord, yet it prepares the way for the truly royal teaching; training in some way or other, and molding the character, and fitting him who believes in Providence for the reception of the truth." Further, "in general terms, we shall not err in alleging that all things necessary and profitable for life came to us from God, and that philosophy more especially was given to the Greeks, as a covenant peculiar to them—being, as it is, a stepping stone to the philosophy which is according to Christ."

Third, he often clearly asserted that philosophy's knowledge of the truth was only partial. “And they [Greek philosophers] think that they have hit the truth perfectly; but as we understand them, only partially: They know, then, nothing more than this world.” Therefore, “the truth that appears in the Hellenic philosophy, being partial, the real truth, like the sun glancing on the colors both white and black, shows what like each of them is.” So, “the Greek preparatory culture therefore with philosophy itself, is shown to have come down from God to men, not with a definite direction, but in the way in which showers fall down on the good land, and on the dunghill, and on the houses.” He added, “And philosophy—I do not mean the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian, but whatever has been well said by each of those sects, which teach righteousness along with a science pervaded by piety, —this eclectic whole I call philosophy. But such conclusions of human reasonings, as men have cut away and falsified, I would never call divine.”

Fourth, He repeatedly points out the handicaps and limitations upon philosophy which faith does not have. Compare the following quotes: “Let Poetry also approach to us [for philosophy alone will not suffice]. . . .For if, at the most, the Greeks, having received certain scintillations of the divine word, have given forth some utterances of truth, they bear indeed witness that the force of truth is not hidden, and at the same time expose their own weakness in not having arrived at the end. I think it has now become evident to all, that those who do speak aught without the word of truth are like people compelled to walk without feet.”

Fifth, he often repeats the superiority of faith over reason, as in these passages: “Well, Sensation is the ladder to Knowledge; while Faith, advancing over the pathway of the objects of sense, leaves Opinion behind, and speeds to things free of deception, and reposes in the truth." He added, “The divine Scriptures and institutions of wisdom form the short road to salvation [as cf. to philosophy and poetry]”.

Sixth, he admits pride vitiates the philosophy of the non-Christians. He wrote, “But the knowledge of those who think themselves wise, whether the barbarian sects or the philosophers among the Greeks, according to the apostle puffeth up. But the knowledge, which is the scientific demonstration of what is delivered according to the true philosophy, is founded on faith.” So also

philosophers copy the truth, after the manner of painting. And always in the case of each one of them, their self-love is the cause of all their mistakes.

Seventh, he qualifies the sense in which the Greeks were "justified" by philosophy, saying it was not a "true" or "entire" righteousness, saying, “Although at one time philosophy justified the Greeks, not conducting them to that entire righteousness to which it is ascertained to cooperate, as the first and second flight of steps help you in your ascent to the upper room, and the grammarian helps the philosopher.” Further, “. . . and to perceive true righteousness, there being another [righteousness as well], not according to the truth, taught by the Greek laws, and by the rest of the philosophers.”

Eighth, Clement believed that it isn't necessary to be a philosopher to become a Christian, although it is necessary to understand Christianity. But as we say that a man can be a believer without learning, so also we assert that it is impossible for a man without learning to comprehend the things which are declared in the faith. Would, then, these modifications spare Clement from the heterodoxical allegations of exalting philosophy at the expense of faith?

Summary and Conclusion

Clement’s position is not unequivocal in favor of Greek philosophy. He also said many negative things about it. The situation can be mediated somewhat by the following points.

First, Clement considered the truth of philosophy to arise only from the gift of God's illumination. He wrote, “Whether, then, they say that the Greeks gave forth some utterances of the true philosophy by accident, it is the accident of a divine illumination [for no one will, for the sake of the present argument with us, deify chance].” And should one say that it was through human understanding that philosophy was discovered by the Greeks, still I find the Scriptures saying that understanding is sent by God. So, then, “the barbarian and Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth not from the mythology of Dionysus, but from the theology of the ever-living Word. And He who brings again together the separate fragments, and makes them one, will without peril, be assured, contemplate the perfect Word, the Truth.”

Further, as a result, philosophy is only a cooperative cause (not the sole or efficient cause) of the apprehension of truth. He writes, “As many men drawing down the ship, cannot be called many causes, but one cause consisting of many; . . . so also philosophy, being the search for truth; not as being the cause of comprehension, but a cause along with other things, and cooperator; perhaps also a joint cause.” And if, for the sake of those who are fond of faultfinding, we must draw a distinction, by saying that philosophy is a concurrent and cooperating cause of true apprehension, being the search for truth, then we shall avow it to be a preparatory training for the enlightened man; not assigning as the cause that which is but the joint cause; nor as the upholding cause, what is merely cooperative; nor giving to philosophy the place of a *sine qua non*. “But if philosophy contributes remotely to the discovery of truth . . . it aids him who aims at grasping it, in accordance with the Word, to apprehend knowledge.”

What is more, in accord with the other early fathers, he emphasizes that the truth of philosophy was borrowed from the Hebrew Scriptures, that is, from God's Word. Of Plato, his favorite philosopher, he wrote: “I know thy teachers, even if thou would’st conceal them. You have learned geometry from the Egyptians, astronomy from the Babylonians; the charms of healing you have got from the Thracians; the Assyrians also have taught you many things; but for the laws that are consistent with truth, and your sentiments respecting God, you are indebted to the Hebrews.” The nature and source of Clement's argument is revealed in these texts: “. . . we may show that the Hebrew philosophy was older [than Greek philosophy] by many generations. Of all these, by far the oldest is he Jewish race; and that their philosophy committed to writing has the precedence of philosophy among the Greeks, the Pythagorean Philo shows at large.” This fact is further attested by "Numenius the Pythagorean philosopher" who, according to Clement, "expressly writes: 'For what is Plato, but Moses speaking in Attic Greek?'" In another passage he argues that all of the truths of Greek philosophy ". . . appear to have been transmitted from Moses the great to the Greeks."

Once again, he admits that Greek philosophy did not directly and definitively reveal Christ. He says in the Stromata: “I do not think that Philosophy directly declares the Word, although in many instances philosophy attempts and persuasively teaches us probable arguments; but it assails the sects.”

In addition, he also argues that faith is a prerequisite to philosophy; that believing is a precondition to knowing. Should one say that Knowledge is founded on demonstration by a process of reasoning, let him hear that first principles are incapable of demonstration; for they are known neither by art nor sagacity. Hence it is thought that the first cause of the universe can be apprehended by faith alone. For all knowledge is capable of being taught; and what is capable of being taught is founded on what is known before. But the first cause of the universe was not previously known to the Greeks. Accordingly, faith is something superior to knowledge and its criterion.

Clement claimed that “Epicurus too, who greatly preferred pleasure to truth, supposes faith to be a preconception of the mind; and defines preconception to be a grasping at something evident, and at the clear understanding of the thing; and asserts that without preconception, no one can either inquire, or doubt, or judge, or even argue. How can one, without a preconceived idea of what he is aiming after, learn about that which is the subject of his investigation? If, then, faith is nothing else than a preconception of the mind in regard to what is the subject of discourse, . . . no one shall learn aught without faith, since no one [learns aught] without preconception. Consequently there is a more ample demonstration of the complete truth of what was spoken by the prophet, "Unless ye believe, neither will ye understand."

If these passages be taken at face value, they effect a considerable moderation of the more vociferous charges of rationalism. In fact, he seems to be saying that even the Greeks who found the truth did so by faith first and then philosophy. It is interesting to note that he seems to be saying the same thing and indeed is using the same verse (Isa. 7:9) that Augustine, Anselm and others are later to use in articulating their views on faith and reason.

In summation, Clement's favor toward philosophy was twofold: (a) First, he saw it as a method of defending the faith from sophistry and heresy. He wrote, "We must be conversant with the art of reasoning, for the purpose of confuting the deceitful opinions of the sophists." ”And the Hellenic philosophy does not, by its approach, make the truth more powerful; but rendering powerless the assault of sophistry against it. . . ." (b)Also, it is evident that Clement, unlike Tertullian whose views will be subsequently treated, had no fear and anxiety about philosophy. In this regard he wrote: “Some, who think themselves naturally gifted, do not wish to touch either

philosophy or logic; nay more, they do not wish to learn natural science. They demand bare faith alone, as if they wished, without bestowing any care on the vine [figure of the Lord], straightway to gather clusters from the first. So also here, I call him truly learned who brings everything to bear on the truth; so that, from geometry, and music, and grammar, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith against assault." So that "philosophy does not ruin life by being the originator of false practices and base deeds, although some have calumniated it, though it be the clear image of truth, a divine gift to the Greeks; nor does it drag us away from the faith, as if we were bewitched by some delusive art, but rather, so to speak, by the use of an ampler circuit, obtains a common exercise demonstrative of the faith."

In the light of the forgoing analysis, a few conclusions may be drawn: (1) He is probably not the pure rationalist which he is often characterized to be. (2) He did believe in the incompleteness of philosophy, as such, and the superiority of Christianity. (3) Faith was considered to be an essential condition for true wisdom. (4) He gave no systematic synthesis of the revelation of faith and philosophy. (5) By boldly attacking philosophical error on purely philosophical grounds, he left his flank open to the charges of "rationalism" and "unorthodoxy," guilty or not.

Those who Deprecated Philosophy

As was observed earlier, the roots of both the appreciation and deprecation of philosophy attach themselves to the scriptural injunctions of the apostles. Their suspicion of human reason is based on Paul's warnings against vain "philosophy" (Col. 2:8) and the "wisdom of this world" (1 Cor. 1:20) The fact too that some Christians, like Justin and Clement, seem to swing the pendulum to the rationalistic end did not hinder the cause of those who cried out against the errors of the philosophers. In point of fact, Justin Martyr's pupil Tatian appears to have done this very thing. He asked, "what noble things have you produced by your pursuit of philosophy? He also contended that a Christian who follows the Laws of God "rejects everything which rests upon human opinion." There were other minor voices who chanted this same chorus, but the most pronounced vocalization was to come from Tertullian, "the father of Latin Christianity."

TERTULLIAN (C. A.D. 155 OR 160 - AFTER 220)



Background

Tertullian was a Latin Church Father from Carthage in North Africa. He was born between A.D. 155 and 160 and died sometime after 220. He worked as a Jurist in Rome and devoted himself to the defense of Christianity. His most famous deprecation of philosophy that has run down through the corridors of time is: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians?" "With our faith, we desire no further belief."

Tertullian's Apparent Irrationalism

The charge of anti-rationalism is difficult to evade in Tertullian. In his Apology he wrote: “So, then, where is there any likeness between the Christian and the philosopher? Between the disciple of Greece and of heaven? Between the man whose object is fame, and whose object is life? Between the man who builds up and the man who pulls down? Between the friend and the foe of error? Between the one who corrupts the truth, and one who restores and teaches it?"

Of philosophy and the philosophers, he declares: “Unhappy Aristotle! Who invented for these men dialectics, the art of building up and pulling down; an art so evasive in its propositions, so farfetched in its conjectures, so harsh in its arguments, so productive of contentions—embarrassing even to itself, retracting everything and really treating of nothing! . . . For all of these

when the apostle would restrain us, he expressly names *philosophy* as that which he would have us be on our guard against.

Occasionally Tertullian called Greek philosophers "those patriarchs of all heresy."In another place he adds, "Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy." His famous statements on the incredibility of Christianity are prime examples of his deprecation of philosophy. Consider the following: “The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed because men must needs be ashamed of it. And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. And He was buried, and rose again, the fact is certain, because it is impossible.

There is little doubt about the antiphilosophical tone of these passages, but can Tertullian be charged with pure and simple "irrationalism." The following evidence demands a negative answer.

The Use of Reason by Tertullian

First of all, it is important to note that the Latin word for “absurd” Tertullian used above is i*neptum* which means foolish. He did not use the word *absurdum* which means irrational. He adds: “But it is the more to be believed if the wonderfulness be the reason why it is not believed. For what does it behoove divine works to be in their quality, except that they be above all wonder? We also ourselves wonder, but it is because we believe. Incredulity, on the other hand, wonders but does not believe.”

Second, Tertullian has many text where he stressed the positive use of reason. For one, he says it is righteous which before everything else makes all goodness rational.

Third, he insisted that “Nothing can be claimed as rational without order, much less can reason itself dispense with order in any one."

Fourth, speaking of the mystery of human free will, he says, "so that it cannot even in this be ruled to be irrational, as if it were wanting in proper sensation and affection.”

Fifth, he speaks about applying the "rule of reason" in interpreting Scripture: "yet even here one's aim is carefully to determine the sense of the

words consistent with [the reason], which is the guiding principle in all interpretation."

Sixth, Tertullian said, "All the properties of God ought to be as rational as they are natural. I require reason in His goodness, because nothing else can properly be accounted good than that which is rationally good; much less can goodness itself be defected in any irrationality.

Seventh, in fact, Tertullian was against baptizing anyone if he is ". . . content with having simply believed, without full examination of the grounds of the traditions" and "carry [in mind] through ignorance, an untried though probable faith."

Eighth, on occasion, he speaks favorably of philosophy and the natural revelation: "Of course we shall not deny that philosophers have sometimes thought the same things as ourselves. The testimony of truth is the issue thereof. In nature, however, most conclusions are suggested, as it were, by that common intelligence wherewith God has been pleased to endow the soul of man. This intelligence has been caught up by philosophy, and, with the view of glorifying her own heart, has been inflated. . . ." He once praised the Epicureans and once admitted ". . . Heracletus was quite right, when . . . he declared that he had certainly not explored the limits of the soul, although he had traversed every road in her domain." He most highly praises Socrates, saying: "For example, Socrates was condemned on that side [of his wisdom] in which he came nearest in his search to the truth, by destroying your gods. Although the name of Christian was not at that time in the world, yet truth was always suffering condemnation."

Ninth, he often criticizes "absurdity" and inadequate reasoning in the views of others. Of Hermogenes the heretic he wrote, "so that it is without adequate reason that he has been anxious to remove evil from God."Against the Valentinians he said, "for what can be right in a system which is propounded with such absurd particulars?"

Tenth, he recognized a revelation of God in nature, saying, "we are worshippers of one God, of whose existence and character Nature teaches all men." Of course, "the heathen," he asserts, "have not a full revelation of the truth . . ." In one passage he highly praises man's natural powers writing: "Now the instinctive knowledge of natural objects never fails in brute

creation. . . . In like manner with man, who is perhaps the most forgetful of all creatures, the knowledge of everything natural to him will remain ineradicably fixed in him."

Eleventh, his highest praise for natural powers is reserved for the testimony of the soul.

These testimonies of the soul are simple as true, commonplace as simple, universal as commonplace, natural as universal, divine as natural. I don't think they can appear frivolous or feeble to any one, if he reflects on the majesty of nature, from which the soul derives its authority. Believe, then, your own books, and as to our Scriptures so much the more believe writings which are divine, but in the witness of the soul itself give like confidence to Nature. Choose the one of these you observe to be the most faithful friend of truth. If your own writings are distrusted, neither God nor Nature lie. And if you would have faith in God and Nature, have faith in the soul; thus you will believe yourself.

Summary and Conclusion

It seems clear from the foregoing passages that Tertullian was not a "pure and simple" rationalist, but it is not as clear just how his acceptance of natural human reason is to be reconciled with his other statements of an antiphilosophical nature. Several things should be kept in mind in evaluating Tertullian.

First of all, Tertullian did not deny that some truth could be discovered by human reason, as the preceding passages amply indicate. After all, God too is the source of general revelation to all men.

Second, he was quick to point out, however, that what truths have been discovered by reason have consistently been corrupted by philosophy. Whatever things are true *in their systems*, and agreeable to prophetic wisdom, they either recommend as emanating from some other source, or else perversely apply in some other sense. The truth has, at this rate, been well-nigh excluded by the philosophers, through the poisons which they have infected it. He wrote: "Ambitious, as I have said, of glory and eloquence alone, if they fall upon anything in the collection of sacred Scriptures which displeased them, in their own particular style of research, they perverted it to

serve their purpose." Further, "Nor need we wonder if the speculations of philosophers have perverted the older Scriptures. Some of their brood, with their opinions, have even adulterated our new-given Christian revelation, and corrupted it into a system of philosophic doctrines, and from the one path have struck off many and inexplicable by roads." Even the Soul, whose testimony he highly praised, corrupts the truth: "Most justly, then every soul is a culprit as well as a witness: in the measure that it testifies for truth, the guilt of error lies on it. . . . Thou proclaimest God, O soul, but didst not seek to know Him."

Third, despite this he was willing that the philosophers may be used with discretion, when they teach the truth. In this regard, he wrote: "One may no doubt be wise in the things of God, even from one's natural powers, but only in witness to the truth, not in maintenance of error; when one acts in accordance with, not in opposition to, the divine dispensation. For some things are known even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many; the knowledge of our God is possessed by all. I may use therefore the opinion of Plato, when he declares, "every soul is immortal." I may use also the conscience of a nation, when it attests the God of gods. I may, in like manner, use all the other intelligences of our common nature, when they pronounce God to be judge. . . . But when they say, "what has undergone death is dead," and "enjoy life whilst you live," and "after death all things come to an end, even death itself;" then I must remember both that "the heart of man is ashes," according to the estimate of God, and that, the very "wisdom of the world is foolishness," [as the inspired Word] pronounces it to be."

Fourth, Tertullian's reluctance to admit the practicality and even validity of philosophical truth is very marked. He wrote: "We shall lay no stress on it, if some of their authors have declared that there is one God, and one God only. Nay, let it be granted that there is nothing in heathen writers which a Christian approves, that it may be put out of his power to utter a single word of reproach. For all are not familiar with their teachings; and those who are, have no assurance in regard to their truth. Far less do men assent to our writings, to which no one comes for guidance unless he is already a Christian."

Whereas he cannot entirely deny the validity of human reason, he cannot see its practicality for Christianity and is rather unwilling even to admit its validity. He declares: ". . . we feel the urgent necessity of freeing, on the one hand, the sentiments held by us in common with them [philosophers] from

the arguments of the philosophers, and of separating, on the other hand, the arguments which both parties employ from the opinions of the same philosophers. by recalling all questions to God's inspired standard. . . .” In a similar passage, Tertullian And this we may do reveals his inner attitude toward philosophy: “I could bear with her [philosophy's] pretensions, if only she were herself true to nature, and would prove to me that she had a mastery over nature as being associated with its creation. . . . if you take the philosophers, you would find in them more diversity than agreement, since even in their agreement diversity is discoverable.”

Conclusion

Clement of Alexandria felt no fear of philosophy; Tertullian did and, consequently, one emphasized and it and the other downplayed it. Neither systematized it well with their faith, although both made attempts. Clement's attempt tended to overstress reason at the expense of revelation, and Tertullian's efforts tended to sacrifice philosophy on the altar "irrationality." With their two extreme positions, they bequeath the problem to the more systematic minds of the Middle Ages, such as Augustine and Aquinas.

GNOSTICISM (C. A.D. 2ND TO 4TH CENTURIES)

Background

Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *Gnosis*, meaning knowledge. An incipient form of Gnostic-like thought may be found in the New testament (in Col. 2; 1Tim. 4; 1 John 4), but full-blown Gnosticism did not arise until the second century. There were vast varieties of religious teachings prevalent in the Hellenized Near East during the time of the first centuries A.D. These doctrines offered knowledge of total reality and in relation to man's salvation otherwise hidden from these individual religious sects. Most of these sects appeared on the surface to be Christian by the time the early Church Fathers were able to make a complete evaluation of the apparent aberrations. Gnosticism, the Greek term *gnosis* meaning knowledge intended to fill the gaps that were perceived missing. Thus, this syncretism was a blending of Jewish, Iranian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and other Oriental traditions, along with the influences of Greek concepts. There is a significant emphasis rejecting the Hebrew Scriptures and joining with irreverent false interpretations. The result? An esoteric alternative offering (an alleged) superior alternative to the established Christian truths. Most of the surviving literature is anonymous or pseudepigraphic, in keeping with the revelatory style in which it is revealed.

Many elements of proto-Gnosticism can be seen in the New Testament which the apostolic testimony condemned (Col. 2; 1 Tim. 4: 1 Jn. 4). These include: (1) Mysticism (salvation by spiritual *gnosis* [knowledge]); (2) Legalism (merit with God by law-keeping); (3) Asceticism (self-denial); (4) Docetism (denial of Christ's humanity); (5) Arianism (denial of Christ's deity). Gnosticism was a variety of religious movements from second through the fourth centuries which stressed salvation through *gnosis*, a special mystical knowledge. It also taught Cosmological Dualism between Spirit (good) and Matter (evil). It appeared to emerge out of a heterodox form of Judaism in reaction to orthodox Christianity (Colossians 2).

General Description of Gnosticism

Gnostic Dualism

Gnostic teachings formulates a dualism between man and the world and between God and the world. This dualism promotes sharp contrasts between these terms rather than forming a complementary purpose where God and man are seen in harmony with one another. The basis of this position is mythological by being eschatological in nature. Accordingly, typical Gnosticismstarts with a doctrine of original transcendence then traces the genesis of the world from a primeval disruption of tranquility to a loss of divine wholeness that led to the formation of lower powers who became the makers of this world. In this, there is an account of the early fate of mankind where a further conflict becomes the central theme. This theme has as a central focus of man's salvation which has him overcoming and dissolving the errors in the cosmic system reintegrating and repairing the marred godhead itself, the self-saving of God.

The Gnostic Deity and His Creation

The supreme deity is stressed to the utmost in all Gnostic theology where he is shown to be dwelling in his own domain outside of the physical universe, alienating himself from man's abode. Epistemologically, therefore, God is unknowable, indefinable and unnamable, unpredictable, and incomprehensible, thus being essentially ontologically "other."

The material universe is shown to be the scene of man's life where his being is a product of cosmic powers, shaping him in the image of the Divine Primal Man, animated by his own intelligence fostering appetites and passions. He is composed of flesh, spirit, and soul but his life is reduced to the mundane because of ignorance. His innate abilities are shackles to his spirit, trapped in a material body. His inner being is where he truly is, and this existence is not of this world.

Salvation by Gnosis (Knowledge)

The goal of Gnostic doctrine is to present salvation—releasing man from the bonds of this world and returning him to the realm of "light." This is accomplished through knowledge of God and his own divine origin as well as his present condition in this present world. Therefore, revelation is required in order to be saved. This "message" brings forth "light" penetrating and awakening his spirit to a saving knowledge reuniting him with divine substance. This salvation in turn, produces a morality that makes the convert

sovereign in his sphere of knowledge and hostile towards the world around him. His life becomes ascetic (avoidance from further contamination of the world and reducing its use to a minimum) and debauched (resulting from an unrestrained freedom) because salvation has freed him from tyranny and yoke of the moral law.

In sum, the real basis of the Gnostic position fosters seeds of nihilism —a complete denial of all established authority and institution. The hidden Gnostic God is a negative being—no law proceeds from him, none for nature and none for human actions. God's only purpose is to save the world leading to antinomianism.

Some Writings of Early Gnosticism

Early Gnostic-type writings include: *Pistis Sophia; The Books of Jesus; Gospel of Mary (Magdalene); the Gospel of Truth; Acts of Peter; The Apocryphon of John; The Apocalypse of Adam; the Paraphrase of Shem; The Gospel of Thomas; The Trimorphic Protennoia*. These books are sometimes referred to as New Testament Apocryphal books. They were written in the second and third centuries, yet many of them claimed to be written by disciples of Jesus who died in the first century.

Some Leaders of Gnosticism

Cerinthius (2nd cent. A.D.) Asia Minor teacher who held Jesus was only a man on whom the Holy spirit descended as a dove but departed before his crucifixion because Christ could not suffer (cf. Docetism).

Marcion (c. A.D. 85—160) of Pontus (in Turkey) is known for contrasting the angry God of the OT with the loving God of the NT. His canon was a truncated version of Luke and Ten of Paul's epistles.

Valentinus of Alexandria (c. A.D. 100—160) was the most famous Gnostic teacher. He held a series of divine emanations that divided mankind into three classes: the spiritual, psychical, and material. Only those of a spiritual nature (his own followers) received the *gnosis* (knowledge) that allowed them to return to the divine *Pleroma* (Fullness). Those of a psychic nature (ordinary Christians) would attain a lesser form of salvation. Those of a material nature (pagans and Jews) were doomed to perish. His followers

included Ptolemaeus, Heracleon (who wrote the earliest commentary on a NT book [John]), Theodotus, and Marcus.

Early Christian Opponents of Gnosticism:

Early opponents of Gnosticism include Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexander, Origen, and Epiphanius of Salamis.

Common Beliefs of Gnosticism

Full-blown Gnosticism blossoms in the second century. It came in various types. Some were ascetic and others were licentious. Some were anti-feminist and others were not. Most shared some common traits. Select quotes from them in writings will illustrate their varied beliefs.

Pantheism: "Thus the Word of the Father proceeds forth into the All, being the fruit of His heart and a form of His will. It upholds the All, it chooses it, and also takes (upon itself) the form of the All, purifying it and causing it to return to the Father and to the Mother, Jesus of the infinite gentleness. The father reveals His breast; but His breast is the Holy Spirit" (*The Gospel of Truth*, 23.33-25.3). "Then he spoke to me and said: I am thou and thou art I, and where thou art there am I, and I am sown in all things" (*The Gospel of Eve* in Hennecke, NTA, 241).

Feminism: "I am (the Father); I am the Mother, I (am the Son). I am the eternally Existing, the Unmixed, since there is none who mingles himself with him" (*The Apocryphon of John*, Codex 8, Hennecke, 322).

Emanationism: "The Lord revealed to me what the soul must say in its ascent to heaven, and how it must answer each of the powers above" (*The Gospel of Philip* in Hennecke, 273).

[Jesus said] "I am the All; the All has emerged from me, and the All has attained to me. Cleave a piece of wood—I am there; lift a stone up—and you will find me there" (*Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 77).

Preincarnationism: "Blessed is he who was before he came into being" (*The Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 19).

Arianism: “The first [angel] is Seth, who is called Christ. The fifth is Adonaios. These are five who ruled over the underworld, and first of all over chaos.” (*The Gospel of Judas*) “Christ was not begotten of God the Father, but created as one of the archangels…that he rules over the angels and all the creatures of the Almighty.…” (*Gospel of the Ebionites*, Fragment 6).

Adoptionism: “After the people were baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John; and as he came up from the water, the heavens opened…and a voice from heaven saying: Thou art my believed Son, in thee I am well pleased: and again: This day have I begotten thee [as my Son]. And straight- way there shone about the place a great light.” (*The Gospel of the Ebionites*).

Docetism: “They brought the two malefactors and crucified the Lord in the midst between them. But he held his peace, as if he felt no pain” (*The Gospel of the Ebionites* 8.35-10:42).

Asceticism: And how could a charge not be rightly brought against the Saviour, if he has transformed us and freed us from error, and delivered us from sexual intercourse?” (*The Gospel of the Egyptians*, Fragment f).

“Wretched is the body which depends upon a body and wretched is the soul which depends upon these two” (*The Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 87).

Perfectionism: “But if the Saviour hath made her worthy, who then art thou, that thou rejects her? Certainly the Saviour knows her surely enough. Therefore did he love her more than us. Let us rather be ashamed, put on the perfect Man [from ourselves (?)] as he charged us, and proclaim the Gospel.…” (*The Gospel of Mary (Magdalene*) in Hennecke, 342)

Self-deificationism: “Your god who is within you and…have provoked you to anger within your souls. Let any one of you who is strong enough among human beings bring out the perfect human and stand before my face.” (*The Gospel of Judas*)

Mysticism: “The supreme mystery, of which the disciples as yet are entirely ignorant, is to be revealed to them in the course of the twelfth and last year of the Saviour’s sojourn among His followers between the resurrection and the final Ascension…” (*Pistis Sophia*, Hennecke, 253) “By means of

knowledge each will purify himself from diversity into unity, devouring matter within him like a fire, darkness by light, death by life. If then these things have happened to each one of us, it is fitting for us to take thought above all that the house may be holy and silent for the Unity" (*The Gospel of Truth* (25.23-25).

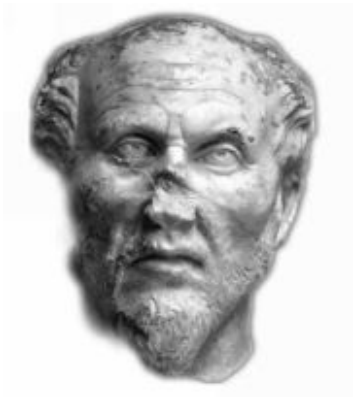
Allegorism: "And Jesus said to him: 'If you are indeed a teacher, and if you know the letters well, tell me the meaning of the Alpha, and I will tell you the meaning of the Beta. And the teacher was annoyed and struck him on the head. And the child was hurt and cursed him, and he immediately fainted and fell to the ground on his face" (*The Account of Thomas the Israelite Philosopher Concerning the Childhood of the Lord* 14.1-3).

Anti-Femininism: "See, I shall lead her, so that I will make her male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (*Gospel of Thomas*, Logion, 114).

Influence of Gnosticism

The remnants of Gnostic Religions exist in Mandaean communities in South-West Iran. Gnostic-like beliefs live on in Bultmannianism, Neo-orthodoxy, Mysticism, Neo-Paganism, and the New Age Movement (see Peter Jones, *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back*).

PLOTINUS (C. A. D. 205 - 270) & NEO-PLATONISM



The Life and Writing of Plotinus

Plotinus (A.D. 204/205—270) was probably born in Lykopolis in Upper Egypt. (A.D. 205). He may have been a Hellenized Egyptian rather than a Greek. Practically all that is known about him comes from his pupil Porphyry. At twenty-seven, he became intensely interested in philosophy even though he was disappointed by the reputed teachers of Alexandria. He heard a discourse by Ammonius Saccas which kindled him to continue his studies for the next eleven years. He and his classmate Origen (the Church Father), studied 11 years with Neo-Platonist, Ammonius Saccas. At the age of thirty-nine, he joined an expedition of then Emperor Gordian (A.D. 244) which provided opportunity for Plotinus to investigate Persian and Indian thought. However, he did not get any further than Mesopotamia where there is no evidence that he was able to study Indian philosophy. He returned to Rome to teach philosophy for ten years. In Rome, Pontius conducted a school of philosophy and after ten years started writing. His attempt to found a community to teach philosophy and live by Plato's Laws was politically frustrated. He won influence over the new emperor, Gallienus, and it is possible that his philosophy was meant to aid the emperor in some way in his attempted rejuvenation of paganism. At the age of forty he began to write. Usually considered the founder of Neo-Platonism. He was a deeply spiritual man, ascetic in habits, who according to Porphyry, achieved ecstatic union with God a number of times during the six years Porphyry was his pupil. Porphyry became his student in A. D. 263. He died (possibly of leprosy) in A.D. 270.

His treatises represented mature thought. They never were given titles or arranged systematically. It was Porphyry who had arranged them by subject matter which is where the name *Enneads* (which means 'group of nine') had originated. Plotinus only wrote one book: the *Enneads* which were composed between from A.D. 253—268. He arranged them into six sections called "enneads" ("nine") which may have been a sacred number.

Significant Influences On Plotinus' Philosophy

Plotinus was significantly influenced by many thinkers before him. In order to understand the philosophy of Plotinus, a knowledge of some of the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, the Neo-Pythagoreans, and the Stoics is very important. Some of the previous philosophers and their doctrines included the following: Parmenides (Monism), Pythagoreans (Mysticism, Reincarnationalism), Plato (Idealism), Ammonius Saccas (Neo-Platonism, Emanationalism). An Eastern (Hinduism) influence is debatable. A. A. Armstrong says No; Brehier says Yes.

Plotinus' philosophy is intuitional Platonic dialectic—from cognition of the sensible to the vision of Ideas towards a central source beyond the Ideas. He retains the Platonic division of things sensible and intelligible—that which is always in motion to what which always *is*. Aristotle had illustrated the relationship between the intellect and the Ideas whereas now Plotinus maintains that the knowing subject and the object known are one concluding that ". . . the act of contemplation has to be identical with the thing contemplated, and the intelligence has to be identical with the object of intellection" (V,3,5.21-23). Plotinus also draws upon Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras as well as Pythagorean and Stoic influences.

Plotinus' View of Reality

Plotinus had a hierarchical view of reality. The higher on the scale of being, the more real something is; the lower on being, the less real it is. His view of reality is shown by three steps: The One–beyond being (cannot be known);–Being is the highest. Second, Nous (Mind): Third, World Soul, and, finally, Matter which is he least real of all. After this is the Void (non-being). Things emanate downward from the One to matter. The farther it goes the less real it becomes; matter is next to nothing. This is an emanational form of Pantheism.

The upward path, presented in the *Enneads*, is the dialectic that "having left aside the region of deception, nourishes the soul on what is called the 'plain of truth' . . . and weaving by way of intellection the genera that proceed from these, until it has gone through all the intelligible order; and in opposite fashion it unravels them until it reaches the first principle" (I, 3,4.10-16). Until one has seen the whole intelligible world, he is not in a position to sufficiently analyze it allowing him to rise to the ultimate principle. Even though being and intelligence exist on the same level of reality and are co-ordinate, Plotinus asserts that being has primacy over intelligence; being first, intelligence second, just as the object of intellection is prior to intellection itself. Therefore, truth will be in and abode with being: "We have, then, this one nature, intelligence, all beings, the truth. If so, it is a great god, or rather, these may claim to be not *a* god but deity entire" (V,5,3.1-2).

God is absolutely transcendent. He is the One who is beyond all thought and all being, ineffable, incomprehensible. Nothing can be predicated to the One. God is the One beyond all distinctions whatsoever. All that can be said is that the One is. And even that we know only negatively, namely, that it is not-many. The One is indivisible, unchanging, and eternal, without past and future, a constant self-identity. It cannot be the sum of individual things because that would require a Source or Principle. Since God is One, Plotinus cannot ascribe any positive attributes to the One because it would delimit It. Goodness may be attributed to the One as long as it is not an endearing quality. God is accordingly The Good rather than "good". Plotinus view of reality is based upon the three hypostases: the One, Nous, and Soul.

The One (Beyond Being)

The ultimate in Plotinus' system was the One which is beyond Being (an Absolute Unity). It is the ultimate source of all things. It is beyond reason, willing, or feeling. It is absolutely simple (indivisible). From the One precedes the many. All things flow from the One by necessity (as rays from the sun or as a flower unfolds from a seed). The One is in the eternal self-actualizing process (which foreshadows later Process Theology). It is beyond being, beyond knowing, and beyond positive description (you can say only what it is not). This is traceable back to Plato and his total "otherness." The One is not conscious and is not personal. It has no freewill. It is an unconscious "drive" or "force" that overflows into Nous (Mind).

The One is the possession of all things and stands as the priority. The One is positionally higher than Nous and is without being (having no intellectual form or a form of its reality) but yet is prior to all being, is unknowable and ineffable, and in fact, cannot be described through human language which only comes close through representative analogies. Plotinus places One outside all being and as the cause of all being.

The Nous (Mind) – Being (basic Duality of Knower and Known)

The Nous emanates (eternally) from the One. Nous proceeds necessarily from the One as its image. It is the motionless intellectual principle residing between the One and Soul yet it is an imitation of the One itself. It is the One's articulation into the realm of Ideas (a referencing to Plato's *Republic*) where it is considered the divine intellect in which resides the multiplicity of ideas and archetypes found in the sensible world. When the One reflects inward, it becomes Nous (Logos, or Mind). Here self-consciousness is attained (by flowing out and looking back on itself). The level is basic duality of knower and known. The Nous is the source of all emanations below it. All other minds are contained within this Mind.

The World Soul

When the Nous reflects inward it produced other minds, but when Nous reflects outward it produced World Soul. From Nous proceeds Soul, corresponding to World-Soul (similarly found in Plato's *Timaeus*). This World-Soul is incorporeal and indivisible, but it forms the connecting link between the super-sensual world and the sensual world. It looks upwards towards Nous and also downwards towards the world of nature. Through World Soul all other souls (living things) were produced. Soul (outer reflection) is more multiple than Mind (inner reflection). The outward is a lesser degree of being, and the inward is a higher degree.

The Platonic view of the soul is that it is immortal and yet proceeds downward through heavenly bodies in accordance to Platonic transmigration. However, many souls have had to come from one soul just as from one race (genus) has come many types (species). Therefore, the highest grade soul is remotely the universal soul. Yet, some of these souls are better, some worse, some more intellectual, others less so (cf. IV,8,3.10-13). The soul's rational function is indeed intellection, but not just intellection, but also to participate

in the higher sphere of managing and ruling (cf. IV,8,3.21-28). Therefore, the highest grade soul though is remotely the universal soul.

Individual human souls proceed from the World-Soul and are likewise divided into two elements—a higher element belonging to the sphere of Nous and a lower element directly connected to the body apparently without memory of the period of earthly existence. Though Plotinus does state the connection of the human soul to the World-Soul, he does illicit personal immortality to the human soul.

The human soul is assigned two parts: the higher, uncontaminated by matter and remaining rooted in the intelligible world, and the lower, co-joined with the body thus becoming contaminated by matter. The soul must overcome evil by first purifying and freeing itself from the dominion of the body and the senses through cardinal virtues. Next, the soul must rise above sense-perception and turn towards Nous though the occupation of philosophy and science. The next higher stage carries the soul beyond discursive thought to union with Nous. The last stage, for which the first ones were prepatory, is the mystical union and ecstasy with the One (or God).

Matter (including bodies)—The Least Being

As Soul turns inward it gives rise to other souls. Since the process of emanation requires soul to produce corporeal nature, it can then be stated that through contemplation it produces the entire sensible world (cf. III,8,3.20-22). This principle then makes manifest the doctrine that body is in soul, not soul in body. “For [the body] lies in the soul that maintains it, and in it is nothing that does not share in that soul” (IV,3,9.36-38). As Soul turns outward it gives rise to matter. Matter is the most multiple of all (it has the least unity). Matter is almost nothing, the brink of oblivion. It can be seen then that all things form one process allowing the soul to make union with everything else. Then, through thought the soul can journey back to the unity of the intelligible world, prior to impressions, and back to what things are themselves, concluding that we are all things as one (cf. VI,5,7.1-8).

According to Plotinus (and agreeing with Plato), man is his soul which is a way to consider him apart from his material body. As long as man remains in contact with his divine origin, he is good; evil is a result of turning away from his originating cause. The body is not necessarily the prison of the soul

unless it focuses on things in this world forgetting its divine origin and destiny. Bodily passions therefore are not states of the soul utilizing the body because the soul is impassive.

Matter is not evil (like Gnosticism which Plotinus speaks against—Ennead II, 9), but it is the least good of all (having no good in it, only the mere capacity for good. So, there is a descent from unity to multiplicity; a hierarchy from the super Good (the One) to the least good (matter); from beyond Being to the least being). Evil then is a result of adhering to matter with the baser side of the soul—(evil) desires or rage. It is nonetheless true that man sins, but his soul, free from causes which govern the body, remains guiltless because of misapplication and ignoring the divine higher actions. By contemplating the orderly movements of the heavens, one becomes conscious of the living soul behind the harmonious universe. The human soul's response will be its desire for likeness of the world-soul acting as a father of the cosmos. Recognizing its likeness, it begins its ascent. Striving towards the ultimate destiny of the soul, it seeks to be in union with the universal soul.

Evil (Non-Being)

Evil is in the realm of non-being. The declining staircase of emanations leads ultimately to Nothing. Being peters out at matter (the least being). Beyond this there is total nothingness—evil. Good fades out at matter (the least good). Evil is where there is no being (good) to divide. Unity is dissipated at matter (the most multiple of all things). Facing evil, being recoils and returns toward higher goods and the One.

The whole Plotinian system can be summarized by the following chart:

THE HIERARCHY OF BEING

UNITY	BEING	GOOD	REALITY	HUMANS
ONE ABSOLUTE	**BEYOND BEING**	**SUPER-GOOD**	**MOST REAL**	**MYSTICISM**

NOUS	**HIGHEST BEING**	**GOOD ITSELF**	**DUALITY**	**MEDITATION**
WORLD SOUL MULTPILICITY	**LESSER BEING**	**LESSER GOOD**	**MULTIPLICITY**	
MATTER	**LOWEST BEING**	**LEAST GOOD (MOST EVIL)**	**LEAST REAL**	**ASCETICISM**
NON-BEING	**NON-BEING**	**NO GOOD (EVIL)**	**NOT REAL**	

Brief Sketch of The Plotinian System: From Unity to Multiplicity

The way things differ is by the degree of unity it possesses. Hence, the basic movement in Plotinian thought is from unity to multiplicity, then back to unity again. It all begins with absolute unity (the One).

From Unity to Multiplicity

Since all multiplicity presupposes some prior unity, there must be ultimately some absolute simplicity at the source of all multiplicity in being. This absolute simplicity (God) does not have being, for being involves multiplicity and the One no multiplicity whatsoever. Hence, the One is the absolute Unity beyond all being. Absolute Unity is without knowledge of itself, since all knowing involves at least the self-duality of knower and known. Therefore, when out of the necessity of its nature this absolute simplicity unfolded and reflected back upon its own absolute unity it became a Mind (Nous) of knowing being. When this Mind reflects inward upon itself, it produces other minds, and when reflecting outward, it gives rise to Life (world soul) and through Soul it gives rise to all other souls (living things). Since the entire process is a necessary unfolding of unity to greater and greater multiplicity, it must end at last in the most multiple of all matter. It is here that the whole process peters out. For matter is the brink of oblivion; it is the place

at which the multiplicity has reached the point that if it went further it would become absolutely nothing. And since Being is good, it follows that matter is least good (since it is the most multiple of all). Matter has no residue of good in it but is the mere vacuous capacity for good (*Enneads* 5.4.1; 5.6.6; 6.7.37; 4.2.2; 2.4.11).

There is, then, a complete hierarchy of being (unity and goodness) from the first to the last; from Good to evil; from Beyond Being to nonbeing; from Beyond Mind to matter; from absolute Unity to absolute multiplicity. And the latter follows from the former with the same emanational necessity that rays radiate from the sun or that a flower unfolds from a seed. However, there is also an inherent necessity in the latter (and lower) that it cannot destroy the former (and higher). Absolute multiplicity cannot destroy absolute Unity. Darkness cannot annihilate Light, and nonbeing cannot abolish Being. There is, in fact, a kind of boomerang of Being. When the last emanation from god overlooks the brink of utter oblivion, it recoils back toward Being, The last remnant of good is repelled in the face of utter evil. The move upward from total multiplicity and evil is thus necessitated by the good and not the reverse. It is multiplicity that is contained within Unity and not the opposite, As Unity necessarily unfolds into diversity, so diversity must ultimately be enfolded again in Unity. Emanational necessity is a two-way ticket; the return trip is guaranteed because the Source of all is superior to all and must ultimately subsume all.

From Multiplicity to Unity

The return trip upward is focused in human beings. They alone partake of all levels of unity. Their bodies are composed of matter, the most multiple and evil of all. The soul has a lower aspect in touch with the body but a higher dimension in contact with the realm of Mind. In order to begin the trip toward Unity, the person must turn from the outward material multiplicity to the inner unity of the soul (i.e., asceticism). And on the inward side, man must turn upward to the higher mental realm of the soul (i.e., meditation) by which one is in touch with Mind itself. In brief, one must move from the sensible to the intellectual.

In further quest of the absolute Unity from whence he came, a human must become one with the Nous, the Mind which is the source of all minds. To know Mind one must become identical with it, since knowing is an

identification of Knower and known. However, even when the human mind becomes one with universal Mind, it has not yet returned home to absolute Unity. For Mind itself has a simple duality of knower and known. Since one cannot transcend the realm of Mind by an act of mind, only a trans-mental act of intuition will suffice. One must move, then, from the sensible to the intellectual and from the intellectual to the intuitional to complete the trip to absolute Unity. In order to reach the One it is necessary to merge with it; a person must become one with the One. This cannot be achieved in any cognitive state but only by mystical intuition, which ascends out of the sensible through the intellectual to the intuitional. By turning away from multiplicity and mounting toward a greater unity one will come at last to the great Unity, when he has become one with the One (4.8.4; 1.6.7; 3.8.10; 6.9.4, 10).

Plotinus' View of Knowledge of the One

Just as all flows from the One, all returns to the One. The One is the Source and Goal of all things. There is a kind of boomerang of Being. As Being approaches nothing it recoils and returns. As it wanders away from the Father of Being, it longs to return home. Unlike the move downward, the move upward is conscious. The way upward is first to turn inward. It is a turn from the outer world (by asceticism). It is a turn to the inner world (by meditation). Then a return to absolute unity (mysticism). The move is from the "external" to the "internal" to the "eternal." Only with great effort; union is gained by asceticism, or turning away from the outward to the inward. Only gradually can we move from multiplicity to unity. Only by a "leap of faith." (This was 1,600 years before Søren Kierkegaard spoke of a "leap" to the God who is the "wholly other.")

There is no positive knowledge of the One. There is no reason or evidence that leads us to leap to the One. The goal is to "become one with the One." To do this, we must first become one with our own mind. Then become one with its source of our mind, the Mind (Nous). Then, finally, as we go beyond Mind itself, we are beyond all duality, knowing, and consciousness. We are in a state of transcendent rapture. This "mystical union" is like Buddhist Nirvana. Like New Age mysticism, when I realize that I am you, and we are God, and we will stop fighting each other because God would not be fighting God. At this level, "Reason" does not apply to "One" just as in Zen Buddhism the "Tao" is beyond thought.

Plotinus' View of Religious Language

Because the One is beyond all knowing and thought, it is known only negatively. Even the term "One" is a negative concept, meaning "not many." The One is not Being (but Beyond Being). It is named only from its sequence (what flows from it) and only extrinsically, not intrinsically. The One is called many things (e.g., Super-Good and Beyond-Being). But these names come only from its effects (we know the One from what it causes). Plotinus said, "He who made being has no need of being" (the cause does not resemble its effects). The many do not resemble the One. Duality does not resemble unity. How then can we know the one? Only by negation and an intuition of the Beyond-Being.

Critics believe the exact opposite, namely, God can be know because there is an intrinsic causal connection between the Creator and His creatures. So, we can know God through His creation (Rom. 1: 19-20; Psa 19:1). When we look at creation we can see something about its Creator. In an extrinsic causal relationship the effect is not like the cause. But In an intrinsic causal relationship the effect is like it's cause. Plotinus maintained that extrinsic causal relationships existed–Hot water causes an egg to be hard, but the water is not hard. Augustine and Aquinas maintained that intrinsic causal relationships existed–Hot water causes an egg to be hot because the water is hot. Heat communicates heat, and Being communicates being. If Plotinus'external relationship is correct, then we can have no knowledge of God. But total agnosticism is self-defeating. It claims to know that we cannot know God. They see an intrinsic causal relation between Creator and creatures, Being produces being and Pure Act produces actualities. God can't give what he hasn't got. God can't share being if He has no being to share.

The Need For Negative Language of the One

Plotinus is very careful to insist that no positive descriptions of this absolute Unity (God) are possible. He agrees with Plato about the One that "it can neither be spoken of nor written of." Since the One is the quality-less source of all qualities, no quality may be affirmed of it without qualification by negation. The reason that there can be no positive names of the One is that it is the Ultimate and there is nothing more ultimate in terms of which it can be described. Plotinus' three answers as to how to "speak" of the One are: First, we speak of the One negatively (He is not this or that). Then, we name

the One indirectly from its effects or emanants. Finally, we know the One by direct mystical intuition, which transcends all cognitive knowing and which serves as a positive basis for all cognitive negations of God.

The Influence of Plotinus On His Successors

Plotinus was one of the most influential philosophers in the history of thought. His influence includes the following: (1) Medieval Christian Mysticism and Asceticism;(2) Religious Language *via negativa* (the way of negation); (3) Immanuel Kant—agnosticism (we can't know ultimate reality--the *noumena*); (4) Hegel developed historical emanations by laying Plotinus out horizontally and saying that God is emanating in history forward. "History is the footprints of God in the sands of time." This is why the latest is considered the best–Hegel's God is unfolding–the most recent is the most true. Truth comes out in the "historical wash"; (5) Soren Kierkegaard and Existentialism—"a leap of faith" to the "wholly other"; Ludwig Wittgenstein —father of linguistic analysis (there is no knowledge of the mystical world (God)); (6) Acognosticism (non-cognitivism) —there can be no cognitive knowledge about God, as in A. J. Ayer and the Logical Positivists; (7) Alfred N. Whitehead—Process theology (all is changing, even God): (8) John Dewey —Meliorism (things are getting better); (9) New Age mysticism; (10) Spiritual disciplines, with asceticism and mysticism, such as Richard Foster *Celebration of Discipline).* (11) *Karl Barth and Barthainism*—The Bible is not the Word of God; revelation is not propositional, only persons. This lives on in the Emergent Church movement.

Concluding Comments

In the system of Plotinus, this mystical "otherworldliness" towards intellectual ascent and salvation through assimilation to the knowledge of God, climb to a new height of systematic expression. The philosophy of Plotinus is a life in which man strives to rise above the sensible world to live in the intelligent realm, ascribing to the order that is above the intelligible. This sought after order is above being, above intelligence, above anything conceivable by men. Much of later Christian mysticism is built on this foundation, for better and for worse.

Despite his emanational pantheism and extreme mysticism, the Christian can learn from Plotinus, even though much of it is negative. For

every false theology is based on a false philosophy. Good theology cannot be done without a good philosophy. But we can learn from the errors of great minds because they are significant errors. We can see farther when standing on the shoulders of giants. There is not much new under the sun after you know Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus.

Introduction to the Medieval Age:

Since most of the medieval philosophers were Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, the issue of "faith and reason" needs to be addressed. For Christians philosophy was a means by which faith could seek understanding. It was a way to render the credible intelligible. Some used the terms and concepts of Platonic thought to express their Christian beliefs (e.g., St. Augustine) and others used the philosophy of Aristotle to do the same (e.g., Thomas Aquinas). But virtually all the great Christian thinkers were engaged in using the tools of the intellectual world to express the faith they had in the spiritual world.

SAINT AUGUSTINE (C. A.D. 354 - 430)



The Life of Augustine

St. Augustine was born November 13, A. D. 354 in Tagaste, Numidia, North Africa (now modern Algeria). His father Patricius was a pagan. Monica, his mother, was a Christian who would instill in him a reverence and a love for Jesus Christ. Even though Augustine had a Christian education and did well at his studies, he portrays himself as a giddy, lazy student. Later, he went to Madaura, where in his early teens he declined morally. Going off to college at Carthage to study rhetoric is where the pagan atmosphere of the city completed his downfall. He grew further from the influences of Christian doctrine. Then at the age of nineteen (A.D. 372), he read Cicero's *Hortensius*. This work awakened in him a love of truth which stayed with him the remainder of his life. After his carnal college days and for almost ten years, he sought truth from the Manichaean religion which promoted the idea that reason in and of itself can make one wise. However, this led Augustine to skepticism. He later taught grammar and rhetoric (373—382). He moved to Rome and became a skeptic (383—384). He then moved to Milan to teach (384) where he was pre-evangelistically influenced by a Christian named Helpedius debating a Manachaen and by reading Plotinus' *Enneads* which helped him think of a pure spirit whereas he was earlier stuck in materialistic thought. (Augustine himself does admit to Platonic influences to his teachings but he did later regret some of these confidences and found it necessary to modify his Platonic underpinnings on certain points, though remaining indebted to its thinking.) Then he came under St. Ambrose's preaching and was later converted to Christianity in the garden when he heard a voice reciting Romans 13:13, 14. His conversion to Christ was a conversion to

wisdom: a wisdom of God "lighting the mind" and bringing strength to his will. For Augustine, philosophy—true philosophy—was consequently inseparable from religion. He was later baptized (387) and reunited with his praying mother that same year, who died shortly thereafter. He was ordained at Hippo after years of study (391). He later became bishop of Hippo. Augustine died August 28, 430 as Vandals sacked Rome.

Saint Augustine does not lay out any specific system of thought. So, he does not develop a systemized way of dealing with topics such as metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of nature, or ethics. Rather, his interests in these discussions centers on the primary focus—the God of Truth who loves.

The Major Writings of Augustine

Augustine was a prolific writer. His works fall into three major periods.

The First Period (386—396) was just after his conversion. He was heavily influenced with Platonism during this time, including some heretical things he later retracted, such as the pre-existence of the soul. Here he wrote: *Against the Academics (386); The Happy Life (386); On Order (386); On the Immortality of the Soul (387); On Grammar (387);On the Magnitude of the Soul (387-388); On Music (389); On the Teacher (389),* and *On Free Will (388-395).*

The *S*econd Period (396-411) was after he was ordained a Bishop. During this time he wrote: *Against the Epistle of the Manicheans (397); On Christian Doctrine (I-III, 397); Against Faustus the Manichean (398); Confessions (398—399); On the Nature of the Good (399);On Baptism (400); Against the Epistle of Petilian (401); On the Unity of the Church (405); On the Trinity (400—416); On Genesis According to the Literal Sense (400—415), a very good commentary on Genesis. Many letters, sermons, and discourses on the Psalms also fit in this period.*

Third Period (411—430) During this time Augustine's anti-Pelagian or strong "Calvinistic" position hardened, especial after A. D. 417. His books in this period included: *On the Merits and Remission of Sins (411—*

412); On the Spirit and the Letter (412), an excellent summary of his view; On Nature and Grace (415); On the Correction of the Donatists (417). [This book signals the late Augustine who became stronger on Predestination from here on]; *On the Grace of Christ and On Original Sin (418); On Marriage and Concupiscence (419,420); On the Soul and Its Origin (419); The City of God (413—426); Against Julian (421,429—430); On Grace and Free Will (426); On Rebuke and Grace (426); On Christian Doctrine Bk. IV.; Retractions (426—427)*—in which he reviewed his earlier writings and retracted some things in them*; On the Predestination of the Saints (428—429); On the gift of Perseverance (428—429*). Many letters, sermons, and discourses on the Psalms fit here.

Augustine's View of Faith and Reason

Reason is Prior to Faith

After his conversion, Augustine set out to write the treatise titled *Against the Academics*. This work's aim was to address the doctrines of the skeptics. In it he outlined his pursuit of wisdom, leaving behind the desires of what mortal men consider good. In his program, there are two wisdoms: the authority of Christ and human reason. St. Augustine was convinced that human reason, left to itself, was not sufficient.

Augustine was not a fideist. He believed in reason to, in, and for one's faith. Reason prior to faith judges whether an authority is worthy of belief. "For who cannot see that thinking is prior to believing? For no one believes anything unless he has first thought that it is to be believed" (*On Predestination*). He said, it is reasonable to ask questions before we believe (*Letter* 102), and reasons may lead someone to believe (*Letter* 137). This first step is widely neglected by persons reading Augustine.

Faith Prior To a Full Understanding

Faith in Christ prepares the way for understanding truth whereas reason assists in helping one to understand more effectively as to what is believed. This idea of Christian wisdom became the intellectual ideal in the Middle Ages. Followers of this doctrine understood this to be a loving study and mediation on sacred Scriptures, aiming at a mystical experience of God, to then ultimately acquiring a vision of Him.

Once one has reason to faith and has accepted a reasonable faith, then he is able to reason to a fuller understanding of faith. At this point, we read his famous dictum: "We believe in order that we may understand" (*Sermons*, 44, 68).Again, "First believe, then understand" (*On the Creed*, 4). Most of the quotes of those who misunderstand Augustine come from this section of his work where he posits that faith is prior to *full* understanding. That is, faith is understanding's step, and understanding is faith's reward.

Augustine's Epistemology

Augustine was once a skeptic following the influence of the Manichaean religion he experienced in his teens. In working his way out of skepticism, he came to the conclusion that there are some things we know for sure. We know for certain that the world is either one or many, finite or infinite, etc. We also know for sure that the world appears just as we perceive it (the mind must judge the truth of this report). We also know that absolute doubt is impossible. We know that we exist; we know that we think, and we know that we love our existence. We also now mathematical truths such as 7 + 3 =10. We also know ethical laws such as, the eternal is better than the temporal.

His answer as to how we know is called Interiorism, namely, "Truth dwells in the inner man." Truth cannot be caused by sensible things (for unchanging and independent truths can't be caused by changing and dependent sensations). Nor can truth can't be caused by an individual mind for our mind is ruled by truth, and truth is public to all minds. Therefore, there must be an immutable Mind that cause all truth. So, to prove truth is to prove the Truth (God).

As to the role our senses play in knowing truth, Augustine held to Occasionalism. That is to say, the senses collect data for the mind but do not cause truth in a mind. For the inferior (senses) cannot effect or cause the superior(the mind). So, on the occasion of a bodily sensation, the soul produces images in the mind (the mind is active, not passive, in sensations).

Of course, we could not see the truth in our minds were it not for Illuminationism. That is, God must illuminate us to see it. For we see truth (ideas) by way of God's Ideas in the light of God (as the human eye sees objects in the light of the sun). All men are illuminated naturally by God (in

different degrees). There is a world of Ideas (illuminated by God) by which we know truth for we can't know truth without the Truth impressing it on us. God impresses the truth on us like a ring on wax. That is, there is a one-to-one univocally relation between the truth in our minds and the truth these divine Ideas.

Truth: Truth is necessary and is therefore immutable. Because it is immutable, it is eternal and therefore cannot possibly change over time and cannot cease to be. The mind cannot achieve this through things which are contingent and cannot discover it on its own. When the mind makes a true judgment, it is in contact with something that is immutable and eternal, tantamount to saying that it is God. The existence then of immutable truths in changeable minds is proving the existence of God. This demonstration of the existence of God, proven by the common nature of God, can be included in the epistemology of Augustine. When more than one mind sees the same truth then there must be a cause which makes all to see this sameness. God must be the inner master who teaches all truth to all men that seek after the truth.

Problem: Augustine was haunted (prior to his conversion) with the questions: Can we be certain of anything? And if so, what can we be certain about? The influences of the Academy had posed the idea that certitude was impossible. However, Augustine, in *Against the Academics,* sets out to prove that this position was absurd and that the senses are indeed trustworthy. Sense data, reporting things to the mind, does so just as it should be. However, the mind sometimes judges incorrectly the reality as it is appearing to it. As with the Platonists, the wise man will realize that sense knowledge will yield only opinions about reality and not necessarily the truth. To know the truth, one must be able to discriminate between reality and the false images associated with reality. It is judgments associated with truth in the intellectual mind, even though the senses do not provide certitude, that truth is still nonetheless possible to acquire. The status of these Ideas is problematic for Augustine. They are not creatures which are mutable and changeable. And they are not God for God is not seen directly as these Ideas are; 3) Nor are they God's ideas –for they are not identical with God as God's ideas are. Otherwise, we would be seeing God directly when we see these Ideas (Ontologism).

How is one to explain this presence of true knowledge in the soul? It is not through sensible things, since they are constantly changing and are contingent, nor in the mind itself which is the source of truth. Truth,

transcending all and being public and open to all, is unchanging, immutable, eternal, and necessary, being found *in* the mind, above the mind, but not by the individual mind. This quality of truth can only be attributed to God. To prove the existence of God, who is Truth, proves the existence of truth (and vice-versa). Thus, for Augustine, the pathway to God looks at the exterior world and turns inward to discover truth, finding the transcendent God.

Augustine's Proofs for God

Augustine never developed a cosmological argument for God, as did Aquinas and others. He was more of a Platonic interiorist (beginning in the mind) rather than an Aristotelian exteriorist (beginning with the senses). The Augustinian approach to the knowledge of God is via man. Man is made for God and is made to know God and love Him. To Augustine, God cannot be wholly hidden to the man who uses his reason directing his mind towards its maker. He teaches that it is relatively easy for men to come to a knowledge of God from the world around them. However, Augustine did allude to a kind of implicit cosmological argument (in *Confessions* 11, 4). He noted that the universe is changing and implied that whatever changes needs a cause. If so, then the universe would need a cause.

Augustine offered two "proofs" for God. The first was the argument from changing forms (in *On Free Will*, 16, 44). He argued that there are changing forms in this world. But all change is measured by what is changeless. Hence, there is a changeless Form (God) beyond this world.

One of his most elaborate arguments was the proof from truth . *He actually called it* a "proof." God's attributes are made known to all men based on the authority of God Himself. Since, according to Augustine and his use of Scriptures to confirm to point, God has made himself known, and as a result, some men have not responded and chosen to honor God as such. Their wisdom has evidently turned to folly, making their ignorance inexcusable. He reasoned that there are undeniably timeless and immutable truths. Absolute doubt is impossible. We know we exist, that we think, and 7+3=10. Now these immutable truths are either caused by sensible things, or by finite minds, or by an Immutable Mind. But they cannot be caused by sensible things, since the changing cannot cause the unchanging. Neither can they be caused by finite minds, since they are independent of our minds. Our minds are ruled by them,

not the reverse. Therefore, there must be a timeless and immutable Mind that causes these immutable truths (*On Free Will* Iii,7 – XV, 39).

Even though Augustine thought that one can be led directly from the world to God, this is not the most characteristic approach that he takes. He maintains that one must retreat from the world and look towards himself to get on that pathway to God. What becomes vital in this process is the role that the mind plays. First, one must focus on the fact that his existence (as well as other existences) is unquestionably certain. To doubt this fact ensures its certainty. (This may suggest a parallel remark to Descartes' *cogntio ergo sum*: "I think, therefore I am.") In addition, one must be aware that he has a soul. Moreover, man also has an inner sense which are related to the abilities to sense the corporeal world. Thus, he establishes the hierarchy of how man draws to a conclusion the existence of God: something exists that can be sensed; sense itself is evidence of a living being (being able to sense); the inner sense is more perfect that the outer sense; and finally, the ability to reason to premier to all the rest.

The Nature of God

Augustine, along with Anselm and Aquinas, is one of the fountainheads of the formation of classical theism. He not only believed there is one infinite personal God beyond the world that created *ex nihilo*, but that this God had certain attributes that distinguished Him from anything in this world. He believed that God is immaterial, self-existent, individisible (simple), immutable, eternal (non-temporal), and impassible (not subject to changing passions.

In addition, Augustine conceives of God as "being" and accepts the Scriptural text of Exodus 3:14 where God identifies himself as the I AM. This principle alone separated Augustine from Plotinus. (The same can be said in regards to Plotinus' triad—The One, The Intellect, The World-Soul—and Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine stating that all three in the Trinity equally share in a unity of essence in one Being—God.) Augustine believed that God was God is tri-personal (Three persons in One Essence). For God is Love and Love involves a Lover (Father); a Beloved (Son), and a Spirit of Love (Holy Spirit). Among the many attributes of God there are two in particular that are noteworthy: light and beatitude (love).

Augustine's Love Ethics

Ethical knowledge is a special case of divine illumination based upon necessary and eternal truths. Many agree on the rules that seem to be imprinted on the minds of men. These "rules" or "laws" come from an Intelligible Law guiding men as a light in the darkness. This is the basis of Natural Law—that include the four majors virtues: prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice—whose awareness is evident in one's conscience. Knowledge of the moral law is not enough; man also has in himself a will to choose.

Augustine was one of the first to develop an love ethic. Love is the center of the moral life of man and it is this love, which is the foundation of all other moral attributes. God is love by His very nature. So, man's obligation is to be God-like. Man has a moral duty to love God and his neighbor, who is made in God's image. The will therefore is unable to pursue the good unless it is illumined by the divine virtues. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The object of this love is God, the chief good. He (God) is absolute love, and man's absolute obligation is to express love in every area of his activity, first toward God and then toward his neighbor.

Augustine's was an unqualified moral absolutist. That is, he believed that there are many moral absolutes, none of which ever really conflict. It is through the conscience that man is aware of the moral law—commanding that the natural order be preserved. It is not sufficient enough just to have the intellect cognizant of this law but the will itself too must be in alignment to divine illumination. All moral conflicts are only apparent; they are not real. Sin is always avoidable. There are moral absolutes that admit of no exceptions and these never actually come into conflict with one another. On the classic question as to whether or not one should ever lie to save a life, the unqualified absolutist answers with an emphatic, no! Augustine dedicated two works to this issue: *Against Lying* and *On Lying*. As for the argument that telling the truth to a murder as to where his victim is hiding is our duty. It is the murderer's responsibility for what he does with this truth.

Critics of Augustine's view respond by noting that it is unrealistic to deny all real moral conflicts. In a real world, there are real moral conflicts. In which case, one should either do the lesser of two evils (one view) or the

greater good (another view). In favor of the later view, is the moral absurdity of claiming that one has a moral obligation to do an evil, even if it is a lesser one (see Geisler, *Christian Ethics*, Part 1).

The Problem of Evil

Augustine was obsessed with the problem of evil. This is what drew him into the Manichaean religion because there had what seemed to Augustine at the time to be an answer to the problem: Dualism. There are two eternal powers, one Good and one Evil that are in perpetual conflict. Eventual Augustine came to see the fallacy of Dualism and concluded that there was only one absolute Good—God. What then is evil? Augustine reasoned that God created only good things. When sin entered into the world, the body ended up controlling the soul, just opposite of what was supposed to be occurring, where contrary (sinful) sensible appetites fed man's appetites. In addition, Evil is by nature a privation (lack of good). One of the good things God created was free will. Free will is the source of evil (privations). Nothing can be totally evil (totally privated). For example, a totally moth-eaten garment would be a hanger; a totally rusted car is a brown spot on the pavement. Something that is totally privated ceases to exist.

He argued that "privation" is not same as negation. A stone without sight is not a privation but a mere absence of sight—which by their nature is not part of a stone. But a blind man has a privation of sight because he should/could see. Evil is not the absence of good; it is the privation of good. It is not a negation of good. Rather, it is a lack of something that should be there. Thus, one cannot be totally depraved in a metaphysical sense. For the loss of all being would put one in non-being. Hence, the destruction of all good (e.g., rationality and free will) would eliminate his ability to be depraved. So, total depravity should be understood morally, not metaphysically. Total depravity *effaces* the image of God; it does not *erase* the image of God in fallen man.

As for why God permitted evil, Augustine reasoned that evil is ordered by God as part of a total good (just as an ugly piece can be part of a beautiful whole). Evil is permitted by God as a part of an overall good. And God, being an absolute Good and an absolute Power can order evil to His own good end. In order to break the bonds of sin, Augustine concluded that it takes both grace from God and the actions of the free-choice of man in order to be saved. It is grace granted by God aiding man's free-choice, helping him to achieve its

purpose—salvation, a turning from the sensible to the intelligible of Divine Ideas. Although the later Augustine, especially after the controversy with Pelagius, placed less emphasis on free will and more on God's sovereign grace.

Influence of St. Augustine on His Successors

Few Christians since the apostle Paul have had a greater influence on Christianity than did Saint Augustine. He is claimed by both Catholics and Protestants. He was the dominant influence on basic orthodox theology.

First, almost all of orthodox theology is traceable back to Augustine. He was a massively influential theologian and philosopher. Indeed, he has been called "the Medieval Monolith."

Second, he was a major influence on Christian philosophy throughout history. He wrote the first great philosophy of history from a Christian perspective –*The City of God.*

Third, he was a major influence on Anthropological Dualism of Soul and body that has come down through the ages to modern times.

Fourth, he was the primary influence on later Christian monasticism, asceticism, and other spiritual disciplines, many of which still exist today.

Fifth, he was the primary influence on Anselm and Bonaventure, two great Christian thinkers after his time.

Sixth, even though Aquinas thought in the Aristotelian tradition, Augustine's basic theology was the most significant influence on Aquinas's theology and even his philosophy was more influenced by Augustine than is commonly thought.

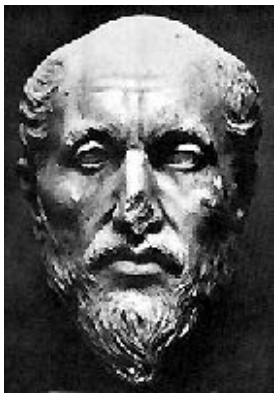
Seventh, Augustine had a large influence on the rise of modern philosophy in men like Descartes and Leibniz.

Eighth, strong Reformed Theology finds it source in the works of the later Augustine and in his anti-Pelagaian writings.

Some Additional Works on Augustine

There are some sources on Augustine worth noting: Geisler, Norman L. *What Augustine Says* (Wipf and Stock, 1982; Bastion Books, 2013); Erich Pryzwara, *An Augustine Synthesis*, (Sheed and Wrard, 1936); Etienne Gilson, Etienne. *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (New York: Ransom House, 1960). Terry Miethe. *Augustinian Bibliography* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press,1982); B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956).

PROCLUS (C. A.D. 410 - 480)



His Life and Works

Proclus lived between A.D. 410 and 480. He was the last major Greek philosopher. He was born to a well-to-do Lycian parents in Byzantium around A.D. 410—412. He received his early education at Xanthus in Lycia and then at Alexandria. Just prior to twenty years of age, he went to Athens to pursue an education in philosophical studies. He was a handsome, healthy young man, though he never married, who intended to become a lawyer but when he experienced conversion, he turned to philosophy, and eventually to Neo-Platonism. He was taught by Plutarch of Athens and Plutarch's pupil, Syrianus. He was prepared to become Plutarch's "Platonic successor", or administrator of the Athenian School of Neo-Platonism after the death of Syrainius. Proclus' teachings remained within the general framework of Plotinus' doctrine. The One, the first principle of all things, is God. He is "the ineffiable itself, the uncial alone, and superessential [identified with the good and from it proceeds intellect, soul, and bodies]" (*Theology of Plato*, III, 3).

Proclus never married and lived as a vegetarian and semi-ascetic, constantly occupied with teaching, writing, and personal meditations and devotions. By the time of his death, he surely knew that he was an illustrious link in the "golden chain" of Platonism but not that he was practically the final one. He wrote *Elements of Theology*, consisting of 211 propositions, followed by what appear to be proofs, is probably the most important and most well known work which was to have an impact on the Arabians and the Latin West. Propositions one through 112 introduce the general metaphysical antitheses to the Neo-Platonism doctrine; propositions 113 through 211 are expositions in

the light of the previous antitheses showing the relationship between the three great spiritual orders (gods, intelligences, and souls) and how these interrelate with the lower grades of reality. Much of this appears in a work known as the *Liber de causis*. In addition, numerous commentaries on the Platonic dialogues, offering a stimulating world vision to anyone in sympathy with Platonism. His writings include the following: *Alcibiades I, Parmenides, Republic, Elements of Physics, Cratylus,* and works on Plato's theology on providence and evil.

The Christian Emperor Justinian closed the Neoplatonic School not long after Proclus' death and caused its last adherents to flee to Persia. With this the philosophy of the ancient Greeks had come to a close. In the meantime, a new type of philosophical thinking, radically different from Neo-Platonism, was being developed within the framework of Christian faith.

His Epistemology

Proclus assumes that reality is not fundamentally material, but mental, or the substance of consciousness; thus every "thing" is ultimately a thought, and every thought is somehow real. The process of knowing is practically identical with whatever is known. Proclus is an "objective" idealist because he regards universal consciousness as independent of any mind knowing it and human consciousness, therefore, as a separate reality moving from one thought to another within the existing totality.

His Metaphysics

Right from the beginning, Proclus establishes the absolute priority of the One through the proof of *reduction* via dichotomies that considers the opposite possibility. (This method is similar to addressing the controversy of the one and the many.) He argues that what participates in unity is not unity itself and therefore cannot be prior to the One. He asserts, "Every manifold [an object of three dimensions] is composed either of unified groups or of henads [i.e., or gods] or units" (Proposition 6). The sensible world, where matter, formless and chaotic, exists and is awaiting formation looked after by Soul. His idea of henads, or units, first proceeds from the One. Proclus does not hesitate to identify these with the gods of Greek mythology.

There is only one true Reality for Proclus; it is the ”One,” beyond all possible description because it is the most fundamental thought conceivable. All other things, considered by themselves, as if independent of the One, cannot be truly real but only more or less apparently real of “less real.” This is a doctrine of emanation according to which the single Reality radiates from itself innumerable lesser yet independent realities.

Proclus’ system is not a typical doctrine of emanation. He held that “all things are in all things, in proper manner.” According to this, every reality or consciousness is mirrored in and therefore appropriately colored by every other consciousness. The One becomes treated as disintegrating gradually, flowing into its many appearances, and the universe becomes a single organization of consciousness, an eternal “movement” of thought from higher to lower and back again. Both the objective, distinction-producing doctrine of emanation and the unifying “all-things-are-in-all-things” principle coexist in Proclus.

The carefully arranged stages that Proclus inserted between the One Reality and the many appearances of daily consciousness were chosen by two standards: Deduction from ontological principles, and the voice of Platonic tradition. The ontological principle, applying equally to all levels of reality, was original with Proclus where he emphasizes the three most important principles are powers, activities, and characteristics.

Powers; Every reality has its own power, meaning primarily the power to imply or “cause” that which is derived from it. And meaning also the power to be implied by, of the “Effect” of, that from which it is itself derived, and metaphorically, the power to “return” to this cause.

Activities: Between every reality and the one(s) derived from it there is a third, connecting reality called the activity of the first, or the process by which the first implies the second, and this activity has its own power. The complete series becomes; The first reality, or cause; Its power to imply the second; Its activity, the process of implication, or the possibility of the second; The power of this process actually to result in the second; The second reality, or effect; and, less important; The power of the second reality to be the effect of the first.

Characteristics: Every characteristic first exists in a perfect form, a reality prior to and the cause of all the many imperfect instances of examples of that characteristic, and that each of these individual, imperfect characteristics is in turn prior to and the cause of whatever "thing" happens to possess it. Only imperfect characteristics are possessed by things; the original perfect form is not possessed by anything and is called the "unpossessed."

Proclus places two concepts immediately after the One: The one's reality is distinct from the One itself. In addition, its power is really distinct. These concepts are respectively called "definiteness" and "infinity." The One is considered the unpossessed, perfect form of unity, the most fundamental characteristic conceivable, which must therefore be possessed by everything in the universe, so that all possessed, imperfect instances of unity are collectively the One's first effect.

God and the Gods

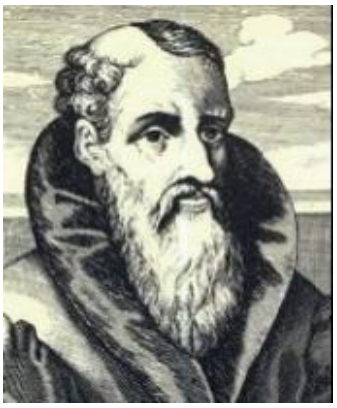
His metaphysical language alternates with a religious, theological vocabulary. The correlation between philosophy and theology is that the One is God or the Godhead. Thus, all the eternal unities produced by the One become gods, and all other eternal realities, which must possess these characteristics or unity, become equated with particular divine beings of the Greek pantheon. In using religious language, Proclus' intentions were basically sincere. Proclus was religious, performing daily devotions to the sun and moon and celebrating not only the Greek but also the Egyptian and other Near Eastern religious holidays. Proclus was a philosopher, not a theologian; his "divine beings" are simply names associated with the existing concepts of his metaphysics and are described by means of these concepts.

Ethics and Mysticism

Proclus' ethics is based on the fundamental principle that the One is also the Good. This 'good' happens to be the final goal of all life's efforts. This not only means that humankind should consciously strive to reach the One (Good), but they are supposed to constantly seek even in the subconscious. Everything being the effect of some cause is posited to automatically return to that cause. However, his ethic is nothing more than his metaphysic in reverse—a retracing of the stages from the lowest human level to the highest Reality where the highest originally declined to the lowest. As a

result, humankind is urged to renounce unnecessary physical desires, social relations, and political interests—i.e., all the misleading appearances of the senses, imaginations, including mere opinions—and is instead to concentrate on rational knowledge, preparing the individual mind for intuitive knowing or the ability to grasp the eternal ideal realities of Mind, power, and being. How does one accomplish this? The most direct links are through the many unities based upon each consciousness having its own unity. This internal methodology by which each consciousness perceives is through its own unity or divinity. Proclus calls this 'faith'—using the traditional term but redefining it as a 'higher kind of intuition.' Certain persons have an innate (untaught) predisposition to this 'faith' that can be stimulated into use.

BOETHIUS (C. A.D. 480 - 525)



Background

Anicius Manilus Severinus Boethius, considered the last of the Roman philosophers and the first of the Scholastics, was born in Rome in A.D. 480, fifty years after Augustine died. He studied in Athens. During the time of Boethius' birth in the year A.D. 480, Italy was under the rule of the Ostrogoths (East Goths who were the foreign invaders of Rome in third and fifth centuries), who had converted to Arian Christianity. Boethius's father had been a consul and he himself became one in A.D. 510 under Theodoric the Ostrogoth. He was a student of Greek philosophy and a master of the Greek language. He was one of the most important channels by which Greek philosophical ideas were passed on to the Middle Ages. He was a Catholic who was shown favor by the Arian King Theodoric, and elevated to a high position in the courts. Later, Boethius later came to an untimely end while holding the position of consul, having been accused of conspiring with Justin, the emperor of the East, against Theodoric. His incarceration provided ample opportunity for Boethius to evaluate and arrange his thoughts on the topic of human happiness, freedom, chance (and providence), and God's foreknowledge of free human acts of the will. Though he was a political leader, he produced a large and influential corpus of philosophical writings. In addition, his major task was translating Plato and Aristotle's works into Latin, showing the fundamental agreement of these two ancients. This work however was never fully completed. Historically, he was a favorite writer of the Middle Ages.

His Writings

The authentic translated works by Boethius are Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation.* He also wrote several commentaries: two on Poropyry's *Isagoge*, one on Aristotle's *Categories*, two On *Interpretations*, and one on the *Topics* of Cicero. He also inscribed logical works by the titles of *Introduction to Categorical Syllogisms, On Categorical Syllogisms, On the Hypothetical Syllogism, On Division, On Definition, On Topical Differences, On Rhetorical Connexion, The Distinction of Rhetorical Loci*. He also wrote on arithmetic and music and a work titled *Consolation of Philosophy*. He also wrote *The Theological Tractises*, focusing on the Trinity, the union of the divine and human natures of Christ, the participation of goodness, and the relation between faith and reason. His book, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, was written in prison. It was one of the most popular books in the Middle Ages. Some 400 manuscripts remain compared to only ten to twenty for most books from antiquity. He also wrote *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*).

His Epistemology

Boethius' accepts Plato's doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul previously existing with the angels, but falling into bodies thereby losing their happiness and purity of intelligence. He writes that the soul is trapped in the body as illustrated by Platonic doctrine and compares the soul to a bird shut up in a cage (see poems in *The Consolation of Philosophy*). He follows Plato's doctrine of reminiscence and insists that he who pursues the truth must search for it within himself. The light of Truth lies darkened and hidden within the soul and learning consists in recovering this lost treasure by the soul's reflection upon itself. His poem concludes: "If Plato's teaching erreth not, We learn but what we have forgot."

In another poem Boethius opposes the notion that the mind is passive in knowing and that it receives its knowledge from the sensible world. The body, through the senses, stirs the soul's intelligence, picturing the sensible world, analyzing, combining and dividing the input it into parts. The senses arouse the mind to uncover the hidden ideas that only need stimulation in the mind, activating the memories from a previous existence. The mind is filled with hidden ideas that need only the stimulation of the senses to become objects of our knowledge. Ideas are not abstracted from the sense world; rather, we are born with them as memories of a previous existence. Reason, the higher state, transcends the object and considers the universal nature of the object found in the memory. In our present state reason is our highest power.

Below it are sense and imagination. Intelligence sees simple forms in themselves, transcends the figures and contemplates the universal nature contained in the individual. The soul once capable of such intellectual intuitions of pure forms, is now forced to use the faculty of reason because it is confined in a body with senses. However, on occasion, the soul does receive glimpses of true knowing since it innately longs to return to the pure state.

His View on Universals

Boethius does not agree with Aristotle that universal ideas are abstracted from the sense world; rather, we are born with them as impressions of pure forms seen in the divine mind in a previous life. His second commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* ("Introduction") provides his classic formulation of the problem of universals. All later medieval philosophers are indebted to him for the terms in which he states it. He asks three questions about universals: (1) Are genera and species and other universals realities or simply conceptions of the mind? (2) If they are realities, are they corporeal or incorporeal? 3) If they are incorporeal, do they exist apart from sensible things or in union with them?

The central problem concerning universals is whether they are real or simply conceptions of the mind. Boethius works towards concluding that universals are neither realities nor concepts but instead are modes of being—they exist in reality and in the thoughts. In reality, they exist as sensible bodies; in the mind, they can be thought of apart from sensible bodies. Here Boethius adopts the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas. These appear to be the only alternatives, and yet both seem to be impossible. If the species "man" of the genus "animal" were a reality, it would be one single reality, for everything real is one in number. Since by definition a universal is common to many (many "men", and many "animals") in this way, it cannot be one, and hence it cannot be a reality. It seems equally impossible for universals to be simply concepts in the mind. If they are concepts, they either correspond to some reality or they do not. The first is ruled out above. The second is ruled out because if no reality corresponds to our universal concept, then it does not represent reality. It appears that universals are neither realities not concepts.

Boethius turns to Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. A.D. 200) for help. He held that our concepts need not represent things as they are in reality. We can form a true concept of a line apart from a body, although a line cannot exist

separate from a body. Falsity arises only when we combine in our mind what is not combined in reality. Our mind has the power to abstract these incorporeal realities from bodies and to consider them in themselves. Consequently, universals have two modes of being: (1) In reality—existing in sensible bodies, and (2) In thought—apart from these bodies. This is Aristotle's solution of the problem of universals, which is different from Plato who taught that genera, species, and other universals are not only known separately from bodies, but also exist outside of them. Therefore, man is known in a variety of ways: known according to the senses (seeing the matter), imagination (pictures the matter), reason (transcends the matter in a way that is present to all), and by intellection (contemplates the matter with a picture in the mind). For Boethius, reality is that which corresponds to universals of the Idea where impressions in the intellect invite one to turn to the Ideas.

Boethius' refusal to accept the Aristotelian doctrine of universals is not surprising in view of the Platonism of the *The Consolation of Philosophy*. In spite of his rejection of Aristotle's doctrine of universals, his explanation of it was destined to have a considerable influence on medieval philosophy. It gave the early Middle Ages some conception of the Aristotelian doctrine of universals, pending the discovery of Aristotle's own works in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

His Metaphysics

Boethius realized that the problem of universals is more than a logical one; it is fundamentally metaphysical, since its solution rests upon the nature of being or reality. In the *De Trinitate*, 2, he tells us that everything owes its being (*esse*) to form. A statue is not a statue on account of the brass which is its matter, but on account of its likeness to a living thing which is its form. So nothing is said to be because it has matter, but because it has a distinctive form. Form determines a thing to be the kind of thing it is, and in so doing gives the thing its being (*esse*). God is pure Form without matter. God is absolutely simple, and so he is identical with what he is. A man's being (*esse*) is his humanity, for humanity is the form that makes him to be essentially what he is, namely a man. Consequently the specific essence of a creature differs from the concrete individual. Boethius thinks this formula expressed the distinction in creatures between their specific essence and individual substance. A substance can be the "same" in three different senses: (1)

Common genus — "animal"; (2) Common species — "man," and (3) Common number — "first and second name of a single person." A substance is "different" in three ways: (1) Genus—general category (man is an animal); (2) Species—unique difference (man is a rational animal), and (3) Number — Numerical difference is the result of a variety of accidents. Three men are the same genus and species, but they are different in number because of their distinctive combinations of accidents. They differ at least by the accident of place, for no two bodies can occupy the same place at the same time.

Pure forms are Ideas in the divine mind; the forms we see in the sensible world are participations of the divine Ideas. Boethius' answer to Porphyry's problems concerning universals is that universals are not simply concepts of the mind; they are subsistent realities. They are incorporeal, because in themselves they have no matter and they are not extended in three dimensions. They do not subsist outside individual things, except as Ideas in the mind of God and in our mind.

Philosophy and its Divisions

In his work *Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius first paints an allegorical picture of philosophy, appearing to him in the semblance of a noble Lady whose every detail accentuated beyond humanness, transcending human nature. It is perennial, indestructible, and independent. Not content with the allegorical approach describing philosophy, he eventually defines it and classifies its many aspects. Wisdom, according to Boethius, is not a speculative knowledge of things, but is rather the highest of all realities, namely God himself. This Wisdom, with its many facets, causes all other things to exist. This Wisdom also illuminates men's minds, drawing them to Himself by love. For Boethius, as well as Augustine before him, philosophy is the pursuit and love of God. However, philosophy has become decadent with factions. The Greek letters "pi" stands for practical philosophy and "theta" stands for theoretical philosophy. The two kinds of philosophy communicate with each other. For Boethius, as for St. Augustine, philosophy is the pursuit and love of God. He divides philosophy into two kinds: theoretical and practical.

Theoretical Philosophy

This is knowledge for its own sake; classified per Aristotle's divisions into: (1) Natural philosophy — studies the forms of physical bodies along with the matter to which the forms are conjoined in reality; (2) Mathematics—studies the forms of bodies (i.e., lines and triangles) without matter and motion, although these forms cannot really exist apart from bodies; (3) Theology (not the theology based on sacred Scripture, but theology in the Aristotelian sense)—forms that have no motion (i.e., god, angels, and human souls before their descent into bodies. These are distinguished by their objects, which are forms more or less separated from matter.

Practical Philosophy

In contrast to theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy is knowledge for the sake of action. It is knowing geared toward doing. Boethius adopts the post-Aristotelian division of practical philosophy into three parts: Ethics deals with the individual or how man is to conduct himself virtuously. Politics deals with the state or how the state is to be ruled according to the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Economics treats the family, that is, the virtuous conduct of the family.

The Methods of the Three Division of Philosophy

Boethius attributes three methods of procedure for the three divisions of philosophy. Natural philosophy uses "reason." Mathematics uses "learning." And Theology uses the "intellect." Thomas Aquinas uses these in a transformed manner in his commentary of Boethius' *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)*.

Boethius Position on Logic and Grammar

Boethius considered logic a necessary instrument for all the scientific inquiries because it teaches the seeker how to correctly reason and arrive at true conclusions. However, he considers it a science in itself and as a branch of philosophy. He classifies it this way because it is its own subject matter and can also be studied for its own sake apart from the use to which other sciences may put it. Illustratively, logic can be compared to a hand, which is both a part of the human organism and as a tool used as an instrument.

The Romans formed the basis of the liberal education based on the trivium which was passed on through the Middle Ages and is in use today. The trivium utilizes logic, grammar, and rhetoric. However, Boethius went a step further and gave the name 'quadrivium' to the liberal arts. This quadirivium included the study of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Later, his pupil Cassiodorus (c. A.D. 480—575) as well as Maritianus Capella (c. A.D. 400—439) and Isidore of Seville (d. A.D. 636) wrote on all seven of the liberal arts. Grammar and rhetoric are also of use in the sciences, not for the acquisition of knowledge, but for its proper expression. Logic, grammar, and rhetoric are three of the liberal arts that formed the basis of roman education and were passed on to the Middle Ages by Boethius.

Boethius' Concept of God

God is the being who is supremely good and the source of all good things (*The Consolation of Philosophy*). We are sure God exists, for anything is called imperfect because of the privation of some perfection. So whenever some imperfection is found, there must be a corresponding perfection. He wrote: "Nature does not make a beginning with things mutilated and imperfect; she starts with what is whole and perfect and falls away later to these feeble and inferior productions. But God exists and he is the most perfect of all beings — a conclusion that agrees with the common belief of mankind. Since God is supremely good, he is supremely happy. Man's natural desire for happiness cannot be fulfilled by any partial goods, such as fame, riches, or pleasure, but only by the total good, or God. This participation in goodness is in a sense becoming divine itself, striving to possess all that is good reaching for ultimate happiness.

Boethius and Free Will and Providence

We are most free when we submit ourselves to God's providence. In his book, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius takes up the problem of reconciling human freedom with God's providence. There is no such thing as chance, if we mean by that something that occurs without a cause. Everything has a cause; nothing comes from nothing. A "chance" occurrence is the unintended meeting of these two causes. With respect to us, there is chance, but not with respect to God, who disposes all things in their due times and places.

The root of the difficulty is that we think that God's knowledge is like our own. We can foresee with certainty only what necessarily happens. For us there can be no certain foreknowledge of a free action, because the action is not yet determined. Strictly speaking God does not foreknow; he simply knows or sees. All events in time are eternally and simultaneously present to him. God's knowledge of our free acts does not impose necessity on them. He simply knows for sure what we will freely do. God does not foreknow; He simply sees and knows in the eternal present some things happening necessarily and other things happening freely.

The Influence of Boethius on Later Philosophers

Boethius translated the logical works of Porphyry and Aristotle into Latin from the Greek. These books were used to teach the Middle Ages the rudiments of Aristotelian logic and many philosophical terms and definitions that became part of the intellectual heritage of the West. Later, others took up the translating Aristotle, and by the middle of the thirteenth century an impressive part of Greek philosophy, including the complete works of Aristotle, was made available to the Latin world. The scholastics, like Aquinas, used these to write new commentaries of Aristotle that freed him from the Neo-Platonic pantheistic twist that Sufi Muslim philosophers had put on him.

Further, *The Consolation of Philosophy* had a considerable influence upon English literature. As early as the ninth century King Alfred translated it into Anglo-Saxon, and in the fourteenth century Chaucer translated it and used some of its ideas in his *Canterbury Tales*.

DIONYSIUS [DENIS] THE PSEDUDO AREOPAGITE (FL. C. A.D. 500)



Background

Denis lived around 500 A.D., but up until the time of Erasmus (A.D. 1500's), he was thought to be the Dionysius of Acts 17, a convert of the Apostle Paul. Erigena, Grossesteste, Albert the Great, Aquinas, and Bonaventure cite him as the one on Mars Hill (in Acts 17). He was Neoplatonic (following Plotinus and Proclus). Denis attempted to synthesize Christianity with Neo-Platonism in order to express Christian doctrines in the framework of Neo-Platonic philosophy. His view of 1) all flowing from God and 2) returning to God became the framework of medieval Christian theology.

His Writings

Dionysius was a theologian. His entire exposition can be described as the exposition of what man can know of God and how, knowing him, he can name God. He insists that the object of his concern, God, is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. He proceeds with Scripture, not with the works of human wisdom, though he does appeal to the efforts of philosophers. Denis wrote several books, beginning of the sixth century. Those having the most lasting influence are : *On Divine Names; Mystical Theology,* and *On Celestial Hierarchy*. All of them show a heavy influence of Plotinus (see above).

His View of Naming God

Denis attempts to prove in the work titled *Theological Foundations* that God is completely incomprehensible to the senses and to reason;

therefore, since one cannot know Him directly, God cannot be named. Any name attributed to God can only be done in a symbolic way. Denis resorts to the terminology incited by Plotinus and Proclus when attempting to name God. Rather than calling God "Being", he prefers to call Him the "One". God contains all within Himself in a pure unity devoid of all multiplicity since He is not the sum total of any multiplicity, but rather, is its source. Multiplicity cannot exist without the One; but the One can exist without the multiple. All that exists participates in the One; however, the One participates in nothing.

This leads to the conclusion that describing God is above one's ability, and is above one's ability to comprehend and communicate who God is. It is the defect of man's language and knowledge of God resulting in man imperfectly naming God. The reason? It is because the idea of God (and therefore His name) surpasses man's perfection and his ability to understand. God's revelation to man in the Scriptures transcends the human mode and ability of naming God.

The Way of Affirmation and the Way of Negation (Via Negativa)

According to Denis, naming God involves three steps. First, there is Affirmative theology which names God what the Bible names Him, namely, He is One, Good, Powerful, Just, etc. (all taken from what God produces). Only divine words can be applied to God's divine nature, for example, Good, Light, Love, and Being. Symbolic theology uses "creature" words that metaphorically transfer the meanings of these words to God. Second, negative theology negates all these things just affirmed of God since we have no positive notion of God. Negative theology begins with symbolic theology through denying as it ascends upwards to God until it becomes apparent that describing God is truly inexpressible, too sacred for words to even utter. God is beyond all our limited sensible and rational concepts. Hence, even terms like One, Good, and Being must be denied of God. Third, there is Superlative Theology which apply all these terms to God in a higher sense. This third way provides understanding filling in where the first two cannot accomplish the task through human comprehension. God is beyond Being (He is super- or hyper-Being). He is beyond Good (He is super- or hyper-Good), etc.

Negating does not mean God is the opposite of it (for He is its superlative). Negating Being does not mean He is non-Being . Negating Light does not mean He is darkness. Negating truth does not mean He is error. The

negation of negations is not nothing; it is something higher. For the negation finds is synthesis in a higher superlative (God is beyond Being). To know God in this superlative sense is to know that He cannot be known.

God's Most Deserved Name is the Good:

Following Plato (*Republic* VI), God is most appropriately called the Good. Were God not Good, we would not have being or knowledge, or anything. As the Super-Good, God over flows in good: it emanates from Him. God is absolutely incomprehensible in Himself (beyond all reason and names). God is named Good, Being, and Beautiful because He causes these in creatures. But God is not Good but the Super-Good; He is no Being, but Super-Being. Because God is the inaccessible Cause of all things, he transcends both what can be affirmed or denied of him from our knowledge of his effects.

The Unity of All Names in God

All names participate in God like radii do in the center of a circle. They are all proto-types , models, or patters of all things (like Plato's Ideas). They are called "divine volitions" or "predestinations." Ideas exist as many rays from the Sun, barely removed from the center but yet distinct from it. God contains all names in Himself as a pure unity, not as a multiplicity. Multiplicity can't exist without the Unity, but the Unity (God) can exist without the multiplicity.

His View of God and Creation

All things flow from God by emanation . This is a central Platonic principle: "The Good is diffusive of itself." There is a hierarchy of Good flowing from God, to angels, to man, and to matter (evil). Spirit is most like God, and matter is most unlike God, indeed, it is evil (having only a semblance of good). He describes a hierarchal illumination as something coming from the Good in degrees proceeding further and further from the originator. To be a member of the hierarchy is to be placed on the universal scale of beings exercising a certain function. A being has its very nature defined by its degree of extension from God: where pure intelligences are at the top and matter is at the bottom. Each member of the hierarchy receives divine illumination making it to be what it is. This illumination must *not* be

understood as a simple gift of light to an already existing beings but rather, it is a gift of light which *is* their very being itself. Each member of the universal hierarchy of Being receives illumination (light) from God. Hence, the world is a "theophany" of God. God governs the universe without compulsion. We are justly judged because of our free actions (*On the Just Judgment,* now a lost book).

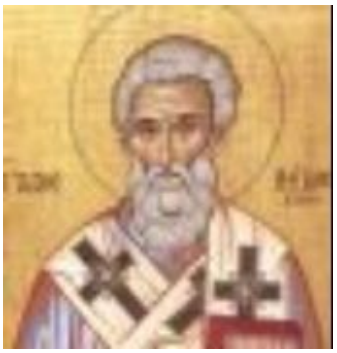
The Non-Being of Evil

Evil then, is non-being; its appearance of reality is due only to its semblance of good it attempts to present. This is how evil deceives man: although it is without substance and reality, it exhibits an appearance of good to man. God, therefore, is not the cause of evil, but he tolerates it because he governs natures and freedoms without using compulsions. In the Dionysius's lost work titled *On the Just Judgment of God*, he illustrates how a perfectly good God can with justice punish the guilty, because they are guilty of their own free will.

His Influence

The world coming from God and returning to Him will become common material of all Christian theologians. Dionysius' doctrine will call for reinterpretations of the metaphysics of being and will provide a general framework from which theologians will interpret the world. The works of Dionysius will be translated into Latin during the Middle Ages and will be commented on by John Scotus Erigena, Hugh of Saint Victor, Thomas Gallus, Robert Grosseteste, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and many more.

JOHN PHILOPONUS (C. A.D. 490 - 570)



Background

John Philoponus, living in Alexandria, was a sixth century philosopher, a commentator of Aristotle, and also a grammarian. He was probably born in the late fifth century in Caesarea and died early in the second half of the sixth century in Alexandria. While in Alexandria, he was one of the last holders of the chair of philosophy, successor of Ammonius the son of Hermias. Philoponus was primarily a Christian philosopher, theologian, and scientist, and in addition, identified with the titles "John the Grammarian" or "John of Alexandria." He was part of the Aristotelian-Neo-Platonic school in Alexandria, Egypt. Very little else is known about him except for a few remarks by him and some of his contemporaries and the dates of his two works. Philoponus significance lies in his comprehensive and massive attack on the main tenets of Aristotle's physics and cosmology, an attack which was not repeated with such thoroughness until Galileo (b. A.D. 1564, d. 1642).

His Works

Philoponus wrote at least forty works on diverse subjects such as grammar, logic, mathematics, physics, psychology, cosmology, astronomy, theology, and medicine. Many of them were translated into other languages. The listing of his works are as follows: *The Arbiter* (Philoponus arguing for a tri-theistic God—God as three 'partial essences'), *On The Resurrection* (maintaining the unorthodox view that the resurrected bodies will not be identical with present bodies), *On the Creation of the World* (stating that the biblical account of creation is neither scientific nor philosophical but is rather an invitation to seek after God and to live in conformity to God's laws),

Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World (a treatise continuing the classical controversy between Christians and Neo-Platonists on the precise conception regarding creation), and *On the Soul* (writing a lasting influence that will be felt during the mediaeval period). A couple of his most important works were: *On the Eternity of the World against Proclus; On the Eternity of the World against Aristotle,* and *On the Creation of the World.*

His Philosophy

The starting point of Philoponus' natural philosophy is the monotheistic belief in the universe as the creation of God. This position is implying a rejection of the Greek belief in the divine nature of the stars. His position leads to his subsequent assumption that there is no essential difference between celestial and terrestrial objects. The object of his attack was the dominating Aristotelian view postulating the eternality of the universe and the dichotomy of heaven and earth, which contributed to an invariable arrangement of the celestial region.

He was a pupil of the Neo-Platonism philosopher Ammonius, son of Hermias, who had been taught by Proclus (412—485) at Athens and was head of the school at Alexandria. His philosophy repudiated fundamental Aristotelian-Neoplatonic tenets such as the eternity of the world. He displayed a certain doctrinal affinity to Plato stripped of its Neoplatonism. He was the first to render a satisfactory account of the syllogism (subsequently the traditional one), stating that the major premise includes the predicate term of the conclusion, the minor premise the subject term. He used diagrams to schematized what kind of conclusions (i.e. universal affirmative, universal negative, particular affirmative, or particular negative) follow from what kind of premises called *pons asinorum* (the donkey's bridge).

His Scientific Views

He viewed light as dynamic, not static as Aristotle did. He believed that heat is generated when the rays from the sun warm the air through friction. He held that space was an empty void. He thought that Plato's *Timaeus* was a correct account of creation, even though Plato has no concept of *ex nihilo* creation.

Philoponous gave eighteen arguments that the world was not eternal but came *ex nihilo*. He reasoned that if the existence of something requires the preexistence of something else, then the first thing will not come to be without the prior existence of the second. For an infinite number cannot exist in actuality, nor be traversed in counting, nor be increased. Something cannot come into being if its existence requires the preexistence of an infinite number of other things, one arising out of the other. Hence, a temporally infinite universe, understood as a successive causal chain, is impossible. Against the Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic belief in the eternity of the world, supported by the apparent changelessness of the heaven, Philoponus again advances arguments centered on the physical world. The universe, like every organic entity, is constructed of parts that change at differing and at sometimes very low rates; i.e., the greater the quantity of matter, the slower the rate of change.

Further, the celestial spheres of Aristotelian theory have different periods of revolution. Thus, in any given number of years they undergo different numbers of revolutions, some larger than others. Hence, the assumption of their motion having gone on for all eternity leads to the conclusion that infinity can be increased, even multiplied, which Aristotle too held to be absurd. What is more, the universe is a finite body. But what is finite cannot exist for an infinite time. Therefore, the universe had a beginning.

In describing the universe as a creation of God, Philoponus applies to an Aristotelian category to the world's matter. Like every physical form, the universe presupposes, a non-universe, a universe created out of nothing and a universe that eventually must perish. Together with this assumption of a *creation ex nihilo*, God is put above nature and transcends all creation. He thus conceives the universe as a vast mechanism functioning according to physical laws where matter was permeated with this function by God at the moment of creation.

On Man's Intellect

Regarding the subject of the human intellect, interpreters of Aristotle agreed in positing that every man has a possible intellect of his own, however, they differed on the "agent" associated with that intellect. Some stated that this "agent" is universal, albeit God himself. Others claimed that it was not God but rather a being that is inferior to God and at the same time superior to man

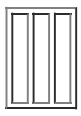
(a *demiourgos* as such) which illuminates man's soul and bestows upon him "light" proportionate to man's nature. Still others, taking a contrary position, say that within the soul itself there is the principle of intellectual knowledge. These observers posited the possibility of two intellects: the "possible intellect," belonging to each soul in virtue of its own nature, and, the "agent intellect", a sort of intermittent actor illuminating the "possible intellect." Philoponus concludes by positing that unless every man has his own intellect, personal immortality is impossible.

His Theological Views (after A.D. 540)

He says motion could have been impressed on celestial bodies by God at creation. He is often credited as the first to envision a unified theory of dynamics. He embraced the unorthodox monophysite view (blending of two of Christ into one). He was also a charged with being a Tritheist (three different natures in the Godhead). This flowed from his Aristotelian view that universals (natures) exist in the mind as rooted in particulars. Thus, he reasoned that God is only one in concept. In actuality, there are three separate divinities, Father, Son, and Spirit. However, in distinction from pagan polytheism, he held that the three divinities are one in the general sense of a "nature." Nonetheless, his view was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 681.

His Influence

The influence of Philoponus was mitigated by his heresies. Aquinas rejected his anti-eternal world arguments. But some Muslim philosophers (e.g., Al Kindi) accepted them. Bonaventure accepted his Kalam argument for God. His anti-Aristotelian physics influenced Galileo (1564—1642). He approached the great thinkers, not as authorities, but as fallible authors. This attitude foreshadowed the rise of modern science 1000 years later.



INTRODUCTION TO MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

This interlude on Medieval Christianity will provide a background for what was going on in the ecclesiastical world during this time. One of the ways this can be done is by reviewing the great councils of the Christian Church during this period. The first eight councils were convened by emperors, whereas the last thirteen were convened by Popes. The first two were before the time of St. Augustine. Councils three to five were before Mohammed.

1. First Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) opposed the heresy of Arianism which denied the deity of Christ. This was called by Emperor Constantine who favored Christianity and was later baptized in A. D. 337. Earlier in 313 he issued the Edit of Milan which tolerated Christianity.

2. First Council of Constantinople (381) proclaimed the deity of the Holy Spirit. This council was called by emperor Theodosius. He made Christianity the State religion by enacting The Code Theodosius which outlawed all pagan schools. (Note: it was not until 384 when Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, enforced this on the Donatists, a schismatic group in North Africa.)

3. Council of Ephesus (431) pronounced against Nestorianism that Mary, was truly the mother of God, i.e., the God-bearer or the one who gave birth to the person (Jesus) who is God.

4. Council of Chalcedon (451) Affirmed that Christ had two nature united in one person.

5. Second Council of Constantinople (553) condemned Nestorian teaching of two person in Christ, one human and one divine and affirmed the perpetual virginity of Mary. Later, during the reign of emperor Justinian, he instituted the Justinian Code (Eastern empire) which restates the Theodotian Code (of the West) for the East.

6. Third Council of Constantinople (680) condemned the Monothelite heresy that Christ had only one will rather than two, a divine will and a human

will. (Muhammad set out as a prophet in A.D. 622 and Islam spread all the way to Spain by 722.)

7. Second Council of Nicea (787) pronounced the lawfulness of venerating images.

8. Fourth Council of Constantinople (869) condemned the schism of Patriarch Photius.

Great Muslim philosophers and civilization developed during this four hundred year period from 870 to 1270. This included Al Kindi (801-873), Al Farabi (872-950, Avicenna (980-1037), and Averroes (1126-1198).

Three Hundred Years of Crusades (see Cross, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 363). First Crusade (1095) proclaimed by Pope Urban II captured Jerusalem (to defend the Latin empire in the East and open the Holy Land for pilgrims). Second Crusade (1147) failed to recapture Jerusalem. Third Crusade (1189—1192) recaptured some coastland but failed to regain Jerusalem. Fourth Crusade (1204-91) recovered Jerusalem by negotiation of Frederick II and kept till 1244. (The land was retaken by the Turks in 1291 and not regained. Support for crusades died by 1396.)

9. First Lateran Council (1123) was the first one called by a Pope. It confirmed the Concordat of Worms (1122) which granted the pope, not the emperor, the sole right to invest a Bishop-elect with a ring and staff and receive homage from him before his consecration.

10. Second Lateran Council (1139) condemned the schism of Arnold of Brescia, a reformer who spoke against confession to a priest in favor of confession to one another.

11. Third Lateran Council (1179) right to elect the pope was restricted to the college of Cardinals and a 2/3 majority was necessary for the election of Pope.

12. Fourth Lateran Council (1215) pronounced the doctrine of transubstantiation , the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, and seven sacraments. Many consider this a key turning point in the development of Roman Catholicism in distinction from non-Catholic forms of Christianity.

13. First Council of Lyons (1245) condemned and formally deposed the emperor Frederick II for his imprisonment of Cardinals and Bishops on their way to the council.

14. Second Council of Lyons (1274) attempted union with the Eastern Church, demanding affirmation of the double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Albert the Great and Bonaventure attended. Thomas Aquinas died in route to this council. It also affirmed desire to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims.

15. Council of Vienne (1311-1312) announced reform decrees, suppressed Order of the Templars, provided assistance for the Holy Land, and encouraged missions.

16. Council of Constance (1413-1418) was convened to end the Great Schism of three simultaneous popes, to reform the church, and to combat heresy. It condemned over 200 propositions of John Wycliffe and condemned reformer John Hus, who held similar doctrines , who refused to recant and was burned at the stake. The Council proclaimed the superiority of an ecumenical Council over the Pope, declaring (in "Haec Sancta") that "this Council holds its power direct from Christ; everyone, no matter his rank of office, even if it be papal, is bound to obey it in whatever pertains to faith. . ." (Cross, DCC, 336-337).

17. Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence (1431-1437). This is a series of councils beginning with Basle (1431), moving to Ferrara (1438-1439), then Florence (1439-43), and last Rome (1443-1445). Chief object was union with the Eastern Church, which sought support from the West against the Turks who were nearing Constantinople. The controversy centered around Double Procession of the Holy Spirit, Purgatory, and the Primacy of the Pope. By July 1439 there was agreement on "the Decree of Union" in which The East agreed with the West on these issues. Subsequently many Bishops recanted and the union ceased when the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453. The Council of Basle and its members were pronounced heretical.

18. Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) declared against the schismatic council of Pisa which had made antipapal pronouncements (1409). Instituted minor reforms but left the main issues of the Reformation untouched.

19. Council of Trent (1545-1547) declared works necessary for justification, purgatory, indulgences, veneration of saints, prayers for the dead, prayers to the dead (saints), and canonicity of eleven Apocryphal books. Many Protestants believe Rome apostatized at this point.

20. First Council of the Vatican (1869-1870) pronounced against pantheism, materialism, and atheism. Pope Pius IX pronounced papal infallibility. It rejected St. Antonino of Florence's formula that the Pope "using the counsel and seeking for help the universal Church" cannot err. Instead it ruled that the Pope's definitions are "irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church" when speaking ex cathedra, that is, as Pastor and Doctor of all Christians.

21. Second Council of the Vatican (1962-1963) attempted ecumenicity (with Eastern Orthodox and Protestant observers); instituted ritualistic changes (like Mass in local languages); pronounced reforms and declared inclusivism of "separated brethren" and salvation of sincere non-Christians.

JOHN SCOTUS ERIGENA (C. A.D. 810 - 877)



His Life and Works.

Several centuries elapsed before another "Christian" philosopher of outstanding genius and originality arrived on the scene. John Scotus Erigena was born approximately A.D. 810 and his passing was thought to have been around 877. He studied in an Irish monastery where he doubtless acquired his knowledge of Greek. As his name indicates Irish decent, Erigena is the only Irishman in our history of medieval philosophy. He was the master of the School of the Emperor of the Franks. In 850, he was joined in close association to the court of Charles the Bald who was king of Neustria from 843 to 875 until his crowing of emperor. He produced one of the greatest theological and philosophical syntheses of the early Middle Ages—a forerunner of the immense *Summae* of the thirteenth century. Medieval writers referred to the journey of classical thought from Athens to Western Europe as the "transference of learning" (*translatio studii*). The decisive event in Erigena's philosophical career was his offering the Latin's the possibility of entering the way initiated by the Greek theologians through his reading and translating of some writings of Greek Neo-Platonist theologians Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 379—394), Maximus the Confessor (c.580-562), and especially Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite who represented himself as the Dionysus converted buy Paul in Acts 17:34. He was greatly influenced by the Neo-Platonist Proclus (410—485). He was probably a Syrian monk who lived about A.D. 500. Through these writers, Erigena received a Neo-Platonist philosophical formation. He sometimes allows his Neo-Platonism to distort, rather than to illuminate the teachings of faith.

His works are as follows: Translates into Latin the *Celestial Hierarchy, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, Mystical Theology, Divine Names* of Denis the Areopagite, as well as his ten letters; Erigena also wrote commentaries on the *Celestial Hierarchy.* Other works include translations of the *De hominis opificio* of Gregory of Nyssa and the *Antiquities* of Maximus the Confessor and a commentary on the work of Martianus Capella. His translations basically made known the tenets of Neo-Platonism known in the West. Erigena was one of the best original thinkers of the Early Middle Ages, especially his work titled *On the Division of Nature.* He also wrote a work called *On Predestination*, where he intervened on the side of human freedom, resulting in accusations of heresy. This particular work was condemned by two councils. The aim of this defense was to dispute the position of Gottschalk. Erigena also wrote a commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, but only fragments survive. His major attempt was the combination of Christian revelation with Neo-Platonic elements in a synthesis of speculative reasoning.

Faith and Reason

Following some of his predecessors' perspectives, Erigena the studied of the liberal arts, including the study of philosophy used as a preparatory foundation to the teachings of faith and reason. In *Exposition of Celestial Hierarchy*, he affirmed that the sacred Scriptures contain the whole of the liberal arts and everything that philosophy posits is contained in its writings. To substantiate, he states, "For what else is it to treat of true philosophy than to set forth the rules of true religion by which God, the chief and highest cause of all things, is at once humbly served and rationally investigated? Conclude, then, that true philosophy is true religion and, conversely, that true religion is true philosophy" (*On Predestination*, chap. 1; PL, 122, 357-3580).

For Erigena, Scriptural authority is not subject to scrutiny. He has two methods of interpreting Scriptures when he compares reason and authority: rational argumentation and appeals to the Church Fathers. When authority is true, reason is not found in disagreement to authority because both originate from the same source. Therefore, they are complementary, requiring both to be used in order to arrive at the pure knowledge of the Scriptures. Though he is arguing for the use of reason as well as the interpretations of the Scripture by the Church Fathers, he sets the hierarchy of Scripture first, Fathers second. He does not promote a blind faith in the Father's interpretations, because reason

does come before the authority of these figures. However, in the studying of Scriptures, faith (in the author of Scriptures) precedes reason.

Both Erigena's and Augustine's goal of life is joy in knowing the truth revealed in sacred Scripture. He writes, "What else is philosophy, except the explaining of the rules of true religion, by which God the highest and principal cause of all things, is both worshipped humbly and investigated rationally." Erigena, identifies philosophy and, claiming that: "No one can enter heaven except by philosophy"! He describes three stages in man's search for truth:

> Before Christ—reason was obscured by original sin. Men were limited to rational investigations of the world which demonstrates the existence of a creator. Reason could only construct a physics in order to understand nature and prove the existence of God who is its cause.
>
> After Christ—reason is not our only source of truth; we have revelation, which must be accepted on faith. Reason now has the task of exploring and contemplating rationally the content of revelation. Reason must bow to the authority of Scripture, but this is not a humiliation for reason; on the contrary, it is of the greatest assistance to it. The wise thing for reason is to accept this truth as revealed by God in the Scriptures. Nor can right reason contradict true authority, because they both come from the same source; namely, divine reason. The third stage of man in his search for truth.
>
> In Heaven—where he shall see Christ, who is the Truth. At this time, faith is no longer needed and it will disappear.

Erigena illustrates the relation of faith and reason by the following allegory of the post-resurrection tomb of Jesus: The tomb is Scripture; Peter is

faith, and John is reason. John outruns peter and gets to the tomb first, but Peter is the first to enter. So, too, faith must precede the understanding of Scripture. Reason comes after and helps us to explore its contents. Thus, the aim of philosophy is wholly spiritual and religious: it is the illumination of faith through human reason, moving toward the vision of Christ's divinity. What makes the journey so adventuresome is that the means chosen to achieve this completely Christian end are the techniques of Neo-Platonic philosophy.

From this point of view, philosophy is exactly in the same situation as religion. Faith becomes the condition of intellectual knowledge—faith goes first, grasps the object of intelligence prior to intelligence itself. In the creature endowed with reason, faith is nothing more than a principle from which the knowledge of his Creator begins to develop. The very nature of faith arouses the mind naturally disposed to that kind of speculation. It is equally true that if reason did not intervene to discern spiritual meanings hidden in Scriptures, interpretations would lead to mistakes. Therefore, the aim of philosophy is illumination of faith through human reason, moving towards the realization of Christ's divinity. The method associated with achieving this Christian end, according to Erigena, is the application of the insights associated with Neo-Platonic philosophy.

His Philosophy: The Division of Nature

Erigena's chief work, the *Division of Nature*, is a vast synthesis of Christian thought organized according to the Neo-Platonic dialectic. Like Plotinus, God is supreme Unity. Creation is the procession of the many from this Unity. It is a process of *division*, by which reality descends from the divine unity, unfolds in a cascade of essences of decreasing universality and increasing multiplicity until individual things are reached. Creatures are finally described as retracing their path and returning to God by a process called *analysis*. By division we derive many less universal concepts from a more universal one. By analysis we can resolve these concepts back into the unity of "substance" For Erigena, this division and analysis are the laws of nature themselves, not just the method of organizing concepts. Division is the process by which universe proceeds from the unity of God; analysis is the process by which it returns to God. Erigena's method is not a logic, but rather is a physic or as he says, a "physiology". To understand the Genesis account is to "know" nature; albeit where science is a proper understanding of revelation.

Nature falls into four divisions: (1) Nature, which creates and is not created (God, the efficient Cause, as Source of all things); (2) Nature, which is created and which creates (the Divine Ideas created by God) and which, in turn, create; (3) Nature, which is created and does not create (individuals things created by the Divine Ideas. (4) Nature, which does not create and is not created (God, the final cause, as a Goal of all where creatures necessarily return to their source). These four divisions can be reduced to two main divisions: God and creature (since the first and fourth are uncreated; and the second and third are created). God is considered the creator of all things and this God draws all things back to himself. Erigena calls this a division of *nature*, not of *being* or *reality* because he believed that "nature" is a broader term than "being." God is not a being for he cannot be the object of intellect or of sense. Sensible things can be perceived by the senses, but, unlike ideas, they cannot be grasped by the intellect. This excludes God since he cannot be the object of intelligence by the senses. So they too are not being, relative to the divine Ideas. It would be a misrepresentation to say that Erigena is a pantheist. He is not saying that God is all things nor is he saying that all things are God.

God and Creation (Division One)

In metaphysics, the word "creation" signifies the giving of being to another by the Supreme Being. This being (small 'b') are identified as creatures from the Creator. In the metaphysics of the One, "creation" signifies the manifestation of unity through plurality. Erigena uses several metaphors in order to convey this meaning. He use the term light beams (creatures) radiating from the intelligible Sun (God), or as numbers (creatures) who are in relation to the absolute unity (God). The God of Erigena is considered an incomprehensible simplicity who reveals himself in creating multiplicity.

God, the source of all reality, is incomprehensible and ineffable God. God is even incomprehensible to himself because anything comprehensible can be circumscribed within limits or defined. God is neither a genus (a general kind of thing) nor a species (a specific kind of thing) and is so far above all particular beings that no category can really be applied to him. God is infinite (without limits). This is not to impute any imperfection to God, but to insure his absolute transcendence and infinity. This Infinite Divine Nature does not know what he is because he is not a "what." As Erigena explains, "How can a divine nature understand what it is, when it has no-thing? For it

transcends everything that is." What then is the meaning of the many names given to God in sacred Scripture? In order to talk about God, three methods can be incorporated attempting to put human language to the indescribable. There is the way of "affirmation theology," such as saying that God is good or great; the way of "negative theology" which properly corrects affirmatives; and the way of "superlative theology," which separates God from any human category based solely upon His transcendence. Thus this "superlative" method takes far beyond what the affirmative and negation fail to accomplish and eliminates the potential of contradiction with the first two ways. To answer this Erigena is faithful to his Neo-Platonic sources, especially Dionysius. We can say that God is good because he is the author of all good things. He is in fact more-than-good. In saying that God is super-good we do not say what he is, but rather what he is not. The divine self-incomprehensibility is the reason for creation. Creation is thus required in order that God may become known to himself. It is God's self-manifestation. It is also his self-creation. Through creation God begins to be some *thing* that can be described in human categories, whereas before he was no-*thing*.

The Divine Ideas (Division Two)

The first creatures of God, or divine manifestations, are the divine Ideas. Erigena writes, "The divine nature is created by itself in the primordial causes (i.e., the divine Ideas). It descends into the principles of things; and as it were by creating itself it begins to be in something." The divine Ideas are the primal exemplars or prototypes of all things. They exist in God – more precisely in the Second Person of the Trinity, the Word or Wisdom of the Father. The first Idea created by God in the divine Word is that of goodness; then follow the Ideas of essence of being, life, reason, intelligence, wisdom, virtue, beatitude, truth, and so on. As existing in God the Ideas are eternal, for he was never without them. But, they are not absolutely coeternal with God, for they depend on him as their Cause.

Erigena did not identify the Divine Ideas with God , as Augustine and Aquinas did. Rather, he sees each Idea as a limited form or essence, different from every other Idea. To say that God is identical with his Ideas is to place limitation and multiplicity in him. He does not see how they can be identical with God without destroying his unity and infinity. In short, he lacks an understanding of analogy. He believes God transcends his own Ideas and knowledge. So, He must descend to create Ideas in order to know himself and

we can understand why he transcends being. Being is one of the divine Ideas. Erigena teaches that Ideas are, in a sense, eternal, and even so are co-eternal with God, but Ideas depend upon God for their eternal existence. God is above all being and is in His simplicity the One. This is how he is able to say that the Ideas are in God without altering God's unity. The Divine Word itself can be considered as the Supreme Idea, the Reason, and the Form of all things visible and invisible.

Being is not the first of the Ideas, for in Platonic fashion Erigena places goodness before being. God rises above his creatures, just as he rose above being. He is super-Being, as he is super-Good. Erigena's God bears a striking resemblance to the One of Plotinus. However, some say Erigena is not a Pantheist because he raises God so far above beings that there is no confusion between them. He believes that that God gives being to everything. But God is not identical with his creation. He wrote, "God is not the whole of his creation, nor is his creation part of God; and conversely creation is not the whole of God, nor is God a part of his creation." In Erigena's doctrine, these "Ideas" are made by God and it is for this reason that the Ideas are not co-eternal with the Father. He states: "I believe absolutely that the Son is wholly co-eternal with the Father; as to the things the Father makes in the Son, I say that [they] are co-eternal with the Son, but not quite co-eternal" (*Division of Nature*, II, 21, 561 C).

Man and the Universe (Division Three)

Creation is a continuous process, beginning with God and ending with individual things: Pure spirits – angels, material things, and a combination of both – humans. The direction of creation is always from the one to the many; from more universal to the less universal. The whole process is like the radiation of light from a central source. Matter is the point at which this illumination, which started with God, comes to an end. The true man is "an intellectual motion eternally produced in the divine mind." The Ideas exist in man to the extent that he is united to the Word—whether man knows it or not. Because of the consequence of sin, man is unaware of the innate presence of the Ideas in him.

If man had not sinned, he would have multiplied like the angels, whose division took place in a purely spiritual manner. No division of sexes would have been needed for the multiplication of the human race. When man sinned,

he lost the perfection of the divine image and sank to the level of an animal. The true untainted man is the Idea of man in God. Initially and according to the Idea, all individual human beings were eternally restricted, but as a result of their own doing, they became separated from the Idea. This division was a result of original sin and once it was initiated, nothing has been able to stop the multiplying process of separation and wandering away from the unity that was meant to be. As a result, the division of the sexes arose, as well as the vast diversity for qualities, thoughts, customs, times, and places which now characterize human beings. As a result of the fall the world as we know it is divided into myriad of individuals, all of which are subject to degeneration and corruption, is the result of original sin. The reason for this is that the universe originally existed in man; hence its fate was bound up with his.

Knowledge is thus innate in man—the whole intelligible and sensible universe existed in man before it became externalized in the present world. What is a sensible substance? It is a certain nature existing in space and time and subject to generation and corruption with the characteristics of quantity and quality. It therefore is composed of several parts; namely, a nature and several accidents. Erigena wrote: "Visible matter joined to form is nothing else than the coming together of certain accidents." A shadow, he says, is not nothing; it is something. It is an appearance. According to Erigena, the visible material universe of matter was designed and created, thus functioning in order to fulfill the purpose of revealing the invisible God who rises above his unity and infinity. In the last analysis, then, the material world is reduced to an appearance of reality. Reality itself is immaterial and unintelligible, and it is found in the realm of Ideas. He is not interested in studying the nature of the physical world for its own sake, He is looking rather for the traces of God in nature so that he can mount the ladder of creation and return to God.

God is *in* all things—because to him God is in each and every thing as the sun is in every light. He only means by God being *in* every thing is that every thing (creature) is essentially a manifestation under the form of God. The *esse* of a being is but a light radiated by the *super-esse*, God. Each "thing" is therefore essentially a sign or symbol wherein God is making Himself known to His creatures. In a sense, the universe is a revelation comparable to Holy Scripture—each and every one of them is a word spoken by the Word Himself.

The Return To God (Division Four)

The fourth division of nature: God as the end of all things. As soon as creatures leave the unity of God they aspire to return to it because of their restless deficiencies. What first must be recognized is that no being does not carry with it the mark of God. This mark is an invitation given to all men to turn back towards their creator. Man is an imprint of God's image and likeness. The soul itself can be called, "a movement toward God" (*motus circa Deum*). The return to God begins with man's death. As Erigena states: "For the end of the whole movement is its beginning, since it is terminated by no other end than its principle, from which its movement begins and to which it constantly desires to return, that it may halt and rest in it." The next step will be the resurrection of bodies, returning their spiritualized souls. Of course, fallen and sinful man cannot bring this about through his own doing. Grace as well as nature is thus required for man's complete return to God. In the end, all things will be absorbed into God: "For god will be all in all when there will be nothing but God alone." The return of man and the universe to God does not entail their annihilation in God. Air does not cease to be air when illumined by the sun, nor does iron cease to be iron when it glows in the fire. So the body remains a body when spiritualized in the soul, and the soul retains its identity when transfigured in the light of God. The return of man to God does not result in a mingling of their substances, it will be a reunion without change or confusion." Moral evil will disappear when the cosmic return is complete, and physical suffering will end when men are spiritualized in God. For Erigena, the notion of a material hell is a remnant of pagan superstition. The only real punishment for a spirit is ignorance of the truth. Some men will be damned because they will never know Christ, who is the Truth.

Erigena's, *Division of Nature*, enjoyed popularity in the Middle Ages. But it was condemned in 1225 by Pope Honorius III for teaching the following errors: (1) All things are God; (2) The divine Ideas are created and create; (3) At the end of the world the sexes will be abolished. It is said that upon his return to Ireland that his angry students stabbed him to death with their pens!

Influences of Erigena

Through his translations of Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus, and through his original writings, he passed on his Neo-Platonism

to the Latin world. Thus, these Greek theological and philosophical ideas that became part of its permanent heritage. Erigena was not an isolated and insulated philosopher of the ninth century. His influence is found in latter men such as Eric and Remigius of Auxerre as well as Berengar. Anselm of Laon and more importantly Gilbert of Poitiers and Abelard, where he takes his thoughts from him as well. The Victorine school had, on a whole, come under his influence.

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

What is generally called Arabian philosophy is a cultural result of the vast Muslim empire, the Ottoman empire. This philosophical perspective had extended from Persia to Spain by the eighth century. This philosophical period in Medieval times also includes Islamic philosophers and Jewish thinkers as well, not just those who were associated with western Christendom.

Like the Christian faith, the Islamic faith soon felt the need of an intellectual interpretation in order to correct the literal interpretation of the Koran that was upheld by the fundamentalists. In the eighth century, contemplation on the Koranic teachings stimulating outside of Islam led to a speculative theology known as *kalam*. The theological group called the "mutazilites" discussed problems relating to human freedom and man's ability to discern moral principles independent of revelation in light of the Moslem concept of God. The contacts of Islam with Greek philosophy gave rise to the mutazilite school stressing the need to resort to reason in the interpretation of revelation. They were primarily interested in establishing the absolute unity of God.

The mutazilites were succeeded by another group, the "mutakallimoun." This new group reacted against the mtuzilites. Later, Thomas Aquinas would refer to these mutakallimoun members as the "Moslem theologians." In addition, one such former member of the mutazilites, Al Ash'ari, constructed a complete validation of the absolute freedom of God. His second doctrine eventually became the orthodox theology of Islam which is still being taught in some Muslim schools.

The greatest contribution to philosophy by Muslim thinkers has been made by those such as Alkindi, Alfarabi, and Avicenna. However, no Muslim theologian ever succeeded in reinterpreting Greek philosophy in the light of the Qur'an. Most of the great Muslim thinkers were not orthodox Muslims but belonged to the Sufi sect, a pantheistic variety of Islamic thought.

MUHAMMAD (C. A.D. 570 - 632)

Muhammad was not a philosopher, but his religious views had a strong influence on many Muslim and Christian philosophers after his time. First, a brief history will be helpful to give a context for his views.

Early History of Muhammad

Muhammad was born in Mecca (Arabia) in A.D. 570. He received his first "revelation" in A.D. 610. He preached in Mecca with little results. He fled from Mecca to Medina: A.D. 622. He returned and took Mecca by force in A.D. 630, though he received little resistance. He received many more "revelations" which were later organized into the 114 Suras (chapters) of the Qur'an. Muhammad Died: A.D. 632. After his death, Islam spread from Arabia eastward to Persia and westward across North Africa and through Spain as far as France by 732 where Charles Martel defeated the Islamic armies at Tours.

The Basic Teachings of Islam

There are five basic doctrinal pillars of Islam: (1) There is only One God (*Allah*); (2) There were many Prophets of which Muhammad is the last; (3) There are both good and bad Angels (a Jinn in between); (4) The Qur'an is God's final and infallible Word of God to mankind (though it references previous revelations in the Law (*Tawrat*), Psalms (*Zabur*), and Gospels (*Injil*) which they believe have been subsequently corrupted (*tahrif*); (5). Final day of judgment ending in heaven (for the faithful) and hell (for the unfaithful). Many believe that Jihad (holy war) is a kind of "sixth pillar" which is used defend and spread Islam.

The Basic Sects of Islam

The vast majority of Muslims are Sunnis. A small but focal minority are Shia or Shi'ites. The Shi'ites (common in Iran), unlike the Sunnis (common in Saudi Arabia), believe the religious authorities should control the civil authorities. An even smaller sect is the Sufis—a pantheistic and mystical sect. Most of the great Muslim philosophers of the Middle Ages (Al Kindi, Al Farabi, Avicenna Ibn Sina, Al Ghazael, and Averroes) belonged to the Sufi

sect and exercised a strong influence on the medieval thought of both Muslims and Christians.

AL KINDI (C. A.D. 801 - 873)



Background

Al Kindi was born in Kufa, Iraq, lived in Basra, to then later reside in Baghdad. He later studied in Baghdad. He was first Muslim Peripatetic (Aristotelian) philosophers. He belonged to a mystical sect of Islam called Sufism. He introduced Greek and Hellenistic philosophy to the Arab world. He was pioneer in chemistry, medicine, music theory, physics, psychology, the philosophy of science, botany, environmentalism, and invented cryptography. He was an encyclopaedist, covering almost every field of Greek learning: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, optics, medicine, logic, psychology, meteorology, and politics. He translated Greek scientific and philosophical texts into the Arabic language. Thus, he made contact with "the philosophy of the ancients." He wrote on Ethics, metaphysics, mathematics, and pharmacology. The central theme was compatibility between philosophy and Islamic theology. It was because of his works that philosophy became a part of Islamic culture and where he became known as the “philosopher of the Arabs.” His task was to reconcile the wisdom of the Qur’an with Greek philosophy. Later, al-Farabi, idn-Sina (Avicenna), and ibn-Rushd (Averroes) would continue the task the Al Kindi endeavored to publicize.

His Writings

He is alleged to have written over 260 books in numerous fields: logic, metaphysics, geometry, physics, astronomy, medicine, music, and mathematics. Most of his works have perished because they were destroyed by militant Muslims, Mongols, and/or overshadowed by Avicenna. He wrote a paraphrase of parts of Plotinus' Six Enneads along with Porphyry's

commentary. His major work was entitled *De quinque essentiis* ("On Understanding and the Understood") a work where he held that matter, form, space, movement and time are attached to every physical body. The work titled De quinque argues that man has four intellects: the agent intellect, the passive intellect, the later as actuated, and the use of existing knowledge. He revised the Arabic version of Plotinus' Enneads, a work he thought was Aristotle's.

Influences on His Thought

Aristotle's Logic and metaphysic (reinterpreted within a Neo-Platonic framework). He held to Plotinus's view of the One (absolute simplicity—tawhid) like the Mutazilite school of theology. He held Plato's view of the Forms. He had a Judeo-Christian concept of creation as an ex nihilo event.

Astronomy and Cosmology

He held an earth-centered view with the Earth at the center of a series of concentric spheres, in which the known heavenly bodies (the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and the stars) are embedded. These bodies are rational entities whose circular motion is in obedience to and worship of God. He theorized that the movement of these bodies causes friction in the sub-lunar region, which stirs up the primary elements of earth, fire, air and water, and these combine to produce everything in the material world. In cosmology, al-Kindi maintained the traditional Aristotelian antiquated view of gravity according to which heavy bodies, such as the Earth, move downward toward the center and light bodies, such as Fire, move upward away from the center.

Science and Religion

Natural theology and revealed theology are compatible. Both have the same object. He placed a strong emphasis on experimentation, and in addition, saying, "We must not hesitate to recognize the truth and to accept it no matter what is its origin, no matter if it comes to us from the ancients or from foreign people. . . ." He criticized predecessors for making claims without empirical proof. He was a pioneer in experimental psychology (which led to music therapy). He makes a contrast between the divine science of the Qur'an and that of philosophers. The Qur'an, he thought, was divine science whereas

philosophy was strictly a human science. The knowledge of the prophet is immediate and inspired whereas the knowledge of the philosopher is accomplished by logic and demonstrative.

His Metaphysics

The goal of metaphysics is the knowledge of God. Later philosophers, particularly al-Farabi and Avicenna, he said that metaphysics is about being. God is absolutely One (all else is one and many). Thus, negative theology is necessary for understanding God. God is both final and efficient cause of creation. Unlike later Muslim philosophers (who viewed creation as a necessary outflow of God), he viewed God as the (only) active agent and efficient cause of it. All other intermediate causes are only instrumental; God alone is the efficient Cause. Thus understood, he made Aristotle's Unmoved Mover compatible with Judeo-Christian and Islamic revelation of God as Creator.

Inspired by the three Abrahamic religions belief in creation (and against Aristotle), Al Kindi held that the universe has a finite past. He used the Kalam argument to prove God's existence (which he got from the Christian philosopher, John Philoponus A.D. 490—570), as stated in two forms.

First, he argued from the impossibility of an Actual Infinite Series. For an actual infinite series cannot exist since it has no end, but the moments before today do end in the present moment. And an infinite temporal regress of events is an actual infinite series. Therefore, an infinite temporal regress of events cannot exist.

Second, he reasoned from the impossibility of adding to an infinite series. For an actual infinite cannot be completed by successive additions. And the temporal series of past events has been completed by successive addition. Therefore, the temporal series of past events cannot be an actual infinite series. There had to be a beginning.

Latter St. Bonaventure adopted the Kalam argument, and Immanuel Kant used it (in his first antinomy of time). It has recently been made popular by Christian philosopher William Lane Craig.

His Epistemology

First Intellect [Logos] was generated by God as the instrument through which all else came to be. He held a form of Platonic realism according to which everything that exists in the material world corresponds to certain universal forms in the heavenly realm. Humans have only a potential intellect which is actualized by the First Intellect who is always thinking about all universals (Forms). This is a form of pantheism in which the is only one universal Mind in which all individuals participate and by which they are able to think. Once a Form is acquired by a human intellect, it can be thought about at will.

The object of *De intellectu* was to clarify the meaning of a distinction introduced by Aristotle between the possible intellects (which receives intellect) and the agent intellect (which produces intelligible objects). He made two points in this work: first, his discourse follows the doctrine of Plato and Aristotle and second, he considers the great intellect, or identified as the "intellect always in act" as an Intelligence. This Intelligence is a spiritual being or substance distinct from the soul, nonetheless superior to it. Its action is to turn the soul's "intelligent in potency" into a "soul intelligent in act." Sufi philosophy therefore contended that there is only one agent intellect for all of mankind (thus making it a form of pantheism) where each individual possesses a receptive power where the action of the agent intellect carries it from potency to act. All of man's concepts flow into his individual soul from a purely spiritual being, or Intelligence. This Intelligence is of course one and the same for all of mankind.

The Soul and the Afterlife

The soul is simple and immaterial but related to the material world through its faculties which operate through the physical body. We must not become attached to material things since they can be taken away. Our soul can be directed towards the pursuit of intellect which will free it from the body and allow it to survive "in the light of the Creator" in a realm of pure intelligence.

The Relationship between Reason and Revelation

According to Al Kindi, philosophy, embracing the whole of human science, depends upon reason utilizing logic and the divine science of religion, including revelation which incorporates faith. He considers the common

source of philosophy being the prophet's revelation and its associated philosophical truth. Generally speaking, he speaks of religion as the ultimate ordering of philosophizing.

Revelation and philosophy are two different routes to arrive at the truth. The advantage of revelation is fourfold: (1) A person must undergo a long period of training and study to become a philosopher; (2) The philosopher must arrive at the truth by his own devices (and with great difficulty; (3) Revelation is clearer and more comprehensive than that of the philosopher; (4) The way Revelation is expressed to ordinary people is superior to philosophy. Revelation is superior in the ease and certainty with which he receives the truth, however, the basic content of both revelation and philosophy are the same.

He had a naturalistic view of prophetic visions wherein the faculty of "imagination" was able to receive the "form" of something without needing to perceive the physical entity to which it refers. Therefore, it would seem to imply that anyone who has purified themselves would be able to receive such visions.

AL FARABI (C. A. D. 872 - 950)



Background

Al Farabi was a Turk by birth, was an adherent of the Islamic faith and was also a mystic Sufi. Born in either Khorasan, Afghanistan or in Farab in Turkmenistan (A.D. ~872). His family possibly migrated to Iran. His main teacher was a Christian Aristotelian at Baghdad. He was introduced to philosophical subjects and detailed treatises on psychology and politics. He studied and taught in Baghdad, the capital of Islamic world. He studied philosophy late in life. He studied Aristotle and Porphyry. He was an alchemist and was called "Second-Philosopher" after Aristotle. He died A.D. 950. (The next great Christian thinker, St. Anselm, was born in A.D.1033.)

His Writings

Al Farabi wrote over 100 works, including commentaries on Aristotle's works, philosophy, science, logic, physics, medicine, music, ethics, sociology, and religion. These include *The Great Book of Music*, *The Virtuous city*, and *On Introduction of Knowledge*. He was one of the great Muslim philosophers. Half of his writings deal with logic and consist of commentaries on the works of Aristotle's Organon. He shared the Neo-Platonic hope expressed by Porphyry and the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. The fact that Porphyry, Plotinus, and Proclus, along with the Neo-Platonic commentaries on Aristotle by Alexander of Aphrodisias, Ammonius, and Themistius, had all been translated into Arabic, provided great fodder to Neo-Platonic hope of synthesizing these great philosophers of old. He also wrote treaties *On the Intellect and the Intelligible, On the Soul, On Unity* and Y*he One*. He also

wrote on non-categorical syllogisms and the problem of propositions. He thought that Moslem theology was subordinate to philosophy.

His Philosophy and Religion

Al Farabi had the same tendency as Al Kindi in that he also dealt with Platonism and Aristotelianism as a single philosophy. He was Neo-Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic. He was influenced by Platonism (Pantheism). His metaphysics was the study of Being as being. For him God is the principal or absolute Being. God can't be known positively, only negatively (via negativa). He has a strong influence on logic, math, medicine, music, and ethics of the later Middle Ages.

Ten Levels of Emanation

As a Sufi mystic, he believed that religion is only a symbolic representation of truth. "Creation" is really an emanation from God (ex Deo) who is the formal and efficient Cause of the world (vs. Aristotle's final cause). There are ten levels of emanation the last of which is from the stars down to the moon (tenth level) below which is the material world. Each of these levels is the domain of the secondary intelligences which act as causal intermediaries between the First Cause and matter. The process of emanation is eternal.

In his cosmological scheme, the active intelligence is the lowest in the hierarchy of ten pure intelligences. This lowest intelligence only acts as an intermediary between the realm of intelligences and individual human minds. At the highest is the Neo-Platonic One identified as Aristotle's First Cause self-thinking mind. Accordingly, this self-thinking One is also identical with Allah. From the One, God, there emanates eternally the first subordinate intelligence, giving rise to the second, third, and so on, to the highest celestial sphere. The active intelligence has no sphere associated with it. Man can only apprehend philosophical truth when it is illuminated by the active intelligence.

Man's ultimate end is to be united, through intellect and love to the agent intellect—the immovable Mover and source of all intelligible knowledge. And, it is the Prophet Muhammad who realizes this union.

Proof for God's Existence

Al Farabi offered a proof for God based on real distinction between a creature's essence and existence (later used by Aquinas): He argued that: (1) Beings exist which could possibly not exist. (2) Such beings exist only accidentally (i.e., it is not necessary for them to exist). (3) Such beings must have received their existence from another (since existence is not essential to it). (4) An infinite regress of causes of existence is impossible since all such beings receive their existence from another. (5) Hence, there must be a First Cause of existence whose essence and existence are identical (i.e., whose essence is to exist).

Influence on Others

Al Farabi had an influence on Ibn Sina (Avicenna), as well as on late medieval philosophy (including Aquinas) in several ways. God is considered the metaphysical ultimate (First Cause; Absolute Being). He provided a cosmological First Cause argument for God. His *via negativa* way of knowing God was also a strong influence on later Medieval thinkers.

Epistemology

Al Farabi maintains that the superiority of philosophy is the area of human knowledge. He argues that philosophers become aware of consistent all-encompassing truth through logical demonstration and insight as compared to non-philosophers who come to truth through varying symbolic knowledge stemming from differing societies. From this, he did not ascribe to there being one religion that was properly suited to all peoples. He did consider prophetic revelation, but only as it was impressed upon the prophet's imagination by a separate active intellect expressing itself in symbolic form. He therefore could not consider the Qu'ran as revelation and the Islam religion as one best suited for all nations.

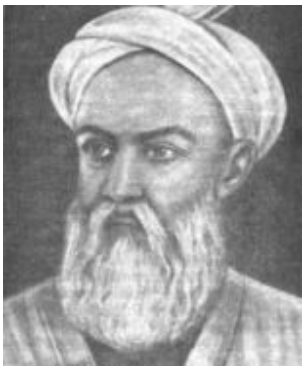
According to Al Farabi, humans are composed of both a higher (intellectual) and lower (physical) dimension. Each human's mind has a potential intellect, but the tenth intellect (the moon) is the Active Intellect of all human beings [pantheism]. Thinking means abstracting universal intelligibles from the sensory which requires the Agent Intellect to act upon the retained sensory forms. Just as the Sun illuminates the physical world to allow us to see, the Agent Intellect illuminates the world of intelligibles to allow us to think, As the mind gradually comprehends these intelligibles, it is

identified with them . In knowing something, the intellect becomes like the object it knows. Humans are free to move toward the perfection it perceives. It is only by this process that a human soul may survive death, and live on after death. In the afterlife only the rational faculty survives (and then, only if it has attained perfection), which becomes one with all other rational souls within the agent

Ethics and Politics

Al Farabi was interested in political philosophy and dreamed of a world-wide society which included all nations of the earth. This terrestrial city though would only be one-step behind the super-terrestrial city. Like Plato, he thought that the best leaders would be prophets as well as those having philosophical training. Ideally, this leader would contain both abilities—prophet and philosopher. Philosophy would provide the theoretical knowledge required for proper societal organization according to the hierarchy of being. These rulings would have to be communicated to the society at large, hence the use of prophetic gifts associated with this ideal “prophetic” ruler. This combination of philosopher-prophet role of Islam, according to Al Farabi, is unlikely and therefore cannot be repeated to any other ruler or Caliph. So then in practice, the philosopher and prophet would have to work in union. He proposed an Ideal state is City-State modeled after Mohammed who ruled Medina with laws he believed that Allah (God) revealed to him. He favors Plato’s practical philosophy. He called others (who followed the Aristotelian model) “futile philosophers.” The ideal society, he says, is one directed towards the realization of "true happiness" (which can be taken to mean philosophical enlightenment. The philosopher's role in relation to society is like a physician’s role in relation to the body, namely, to establish a "virtuous" society by healing the souls of the people, establishing justice and guiding them towards "true happiness.” Few societies will ever be able to attain this goal. Most are ignorant of it or errant in it.

AVICENNA (IBN SINA) (C. A.D. 980 - 1037)



Background

Perhaps the greatest Islamic philosopher, Ibn-Sina or better known as Avicenna, was recognized as a philosopher of the thirteenth century through his work titled *Sufficientiae*. This work primarily addressed the divisions of philosophy, such as logic, physics, mathematics, psychology, and metaphysics. Avicenna drew from many resources, including Aristotle, the Neo-Platonists, Alkindi, and especially Al Farabi. He passed on many metaphysical notions, especially the notions of "thing" (nes) and "necessity" (necesse), being as the opposite of possibility. Hence, he makes the following distinction: a being is something that exists and is an object which a truth can be articulated because everything has an essence or quiddity (better known as its logical nature) by which it is what it is. He calls this essence of a thing its "certitude."

Avicenna was born in A. D. 980 in Afshana, near Bukhara, in present day Uzbekistan. He died at Hamadan in 1037 at the age of fifty-seven. [As a matter of reference, St. Anselm was born in A. D. 1033 just before Avicenna died.] Persian by birth, he was a precocious youth running ahead of his instructors, and, to a great extent, ended up teaching himself theology, physics, mathematics, medicine, logic, and philosophy. He was a Persian philosopher, as well as an astronomer, chemist, geologist, logician, paleontologist, mathematician, physicist, poet, and scientist. He is considered the father of modern medicine. He discovered the contagious nature of infectious diseases, introduced quarantine to limit the spread of contagious diseases, introduced experimental medicine, started evidence-based medicine, clinical trials, randomized controlled trials, efficacy tests, clinical pharmacology, neuropsychiatry, offered the idea of the syndrome, and stressed the importance

of a good diet and exercise on health. He was in the service of various princes, sometimes in the position of vizir (high official), sometimes in that of a physician. Later, after the fall of one of his patrons he suffered a period of imprisonment.

He was a child prodigy who memorized the Qur'an by age ten and absorbed all secular knowledge by age eighteen. His friends advised him to slow down and take life moderately. He refused, stating that: "I prefer a short life with width to a narrow one with length." It is said that remorse overtook him on his deathbed whereupon he gave his goods to the poor, restored unjust gains, freed his slaves, and read through the Qur'an every three days until he died in June 1037.

His Writings

Most of his writings have survived, mostly in Arabic. His general division of philosophy into its branches is based on Aristotelian lines. Logic is regarded as a preparatory to philosophy, and philosophy proper is divided into theoretical or speculative philosophy (including physics, mathematics and theology) and practical philosophy (including ethics, economics and politics). The study of theology is further divided into first theology, comprising both what was later to be known as ontology and natural theology, and second theology, which includes topics relating specifically to Islamic thought. Avicenna was not the first to distinguish between essence and existence because Al Farabi had previously made such a distinction, interpreting existence as an "accident" which accrues to an essence.

He wrote some 450 treatises. One hundred-fifty of his books on philosophy survive. His most famous works are *The Book of Healing*, a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopedia, and *The Canon of Medicine*, which was a standard medical text at many medieval universities up to as late as A.D. 1650 (just after the founding of America in 1620). His *Logic and Metaphysics* are his standard works in philosophy. He also wrote woks titled: *Metaphysics, On Principles of Nature,* and *Book of Causes*.

His Philosophy

Avicenna was an expert logician. He studied the philosophy of Aristotle as a teen ager and became a medical doctor by age eighteen. He

developed the concept of uniformitarianism and the law of superposition in geology 700 years before Hutton for which he is considered by some to be the fore-father of modern geology. Avicenna criticized Aristotelian induction, arguing that "it does not lead to the absolute, universal, and certain premises that it purports to provide." In its place, he developed a "method of experimentation as a means for scientific inquiry" 600 years before Francis Bacon.

Avicenna follows Aristotle's general guidelines but instead interprets Aristotle's theses based on his own metaphysics. He infers that "existence" or "being" is separate from or is an accident of essence. Logic, being interested in more than just bare facts, is greatly concerned with the essence of a thing rather than its existence, where existence is considered accidental to essence. Logic asks the question "Why does it exist?" or "Why is it what it is?" In regards to theology, one must first inquire, "Does God exist?" (or, "Is there a void?") prior to "What is God's nature?" (or "What is the nature of void?"). The universality of all things can further be divided into two classes: the objects of speculative philosophy aiming to know what things are and the object of practical philosophy focusing on how one should act dependent on free choice and will. Among speculative philosophy, there are those objects which can change, such as the essence of man (the essential characteristics making it what it is), and those which cannot change, such as the form (the body's matter) of man.

His Metaphysics

Metaphysics has the goal of knowing God and is labeled by Avicenna as the "divine science." It is the primary science studying the necessary properties of being. It offers proofs for the existence of God, the first cause of everything excluding itself. Metaphysics to Avicenna is an abstract science of causes or cause related to all effects, however, it should not be confused with logical speculation. Rather, it considers its objects apart from matter and sensible qualities. Avicenna also calls this the "prime science" because it deals with the first principle—being and its cause. Being is something that is; a thing is an object that something true can be said about it. The truth said about a thing is called its "quiddity" or essence. Therefore, if something is neither being nor can be conceived through its quiddity, it is nothing and cannot be known. And too, metaphysics is called "wisdom" since it deals with the

noblest of all causes, namely, God. Until causes are known, all natural causes remain only probabilities.

What is independent and necessary does not need a cause; what needs a cause is merely possible. Thus there can only be one necessary being; if more than one, then one needs to be distinct (or else they could not be discernible) and then both cannot be necessary. If one part is not found in the other being, then this violates the meaning associated with a necessary being. Therefore, there can only be one necessary being.

Truth, according to Avicenna, is divided into two kinds: necessary truths relating to God or separate Intelligences and non-necessary truths relating to possible existences. This division of philosophy follows its object in three measures: the natural science dealing with the objects motive existence, the intellectual science correlating mathematics to the object itself, and the divine science evaluating the object separated from matter and motion. Thus, the quest of truth deals with the object's essence or the nature of the thing found in either themselves (metaphysics), in concrete things (physics), or in the intellect (logic). The purpose of logic, an instrument of science and as an art, is for the intellect to discover truths associated with essences, which are not necessarily found in the essence itself, preserving the mind from error in the quest for truth. This logic allows one to go from what is already known to what is unknown.

He attempted to reconcile Aristotelianism and Platonism. Avicenna was also influential in medieval Europe, particularly his doctrines on the nature of the soul and his existence-essence distinction (owing much to al-Farabi) later used by the scholastics. His philosophy was condemned in Paris in A. D. 1210. He advanced Aristotelian logic (with the hypothetical syllogism and a theory on propositional calculus) and developed inductive logic by describing the methods of agreement, difference and concomitant variation. He comments on several Quranic verses and held the Qur'an in high esteem. He rejected astrology due to its conjectural rather than empirical nature and its conflicts with the Qur'an. He believed Islamic prophets were "inspired philosophers."

His View of God

Theology is the crown of metaphysical studies where its first task, according to Avicenna, is to establish the existence of the primary cause, namely, the First Cause, God. Avicenna speaks of an "agent cause" as "the cause that gives to the thing an existence (esse) distinct from its own" (Metaphysics, VI, 1) which is the origin of existence itself. He offered proofs for the existence of God. His main argument was a cosmological argument. It was an inference to a First Cause.

The Existence of God

His argument for God went like this: (1) There are possible beings (i.e., things which come into existence because they are caused to exist but would not otherwise exist on their own). (2) Whatever possible beings there are have a cause for their being (since they do not explain their own existence). (3) But there cannot be an infinite series of causes of being. There can be an infinite series of causes of becoming (like father begets son, who begets son, etc.). But there cannot be an infinite series of causes of being, since the cause of being must be simultaneous with its effect (unless there was a causal basis for the series, there would be no beings there to be caused). (4) Therefore, there must be a first Cause for all possible beings (i.e., for all beings that come into existence). (5) This first Cause must be a necessary Being, for what is the cause of all possible beings cannot itself be a possible being. It must be a necessary Being.

His notion of efficient causality showed a propensity for entering into the idea of natural causality. Avicenna writes in *On the Principles of Nature*, "There must therefore be, over and above matter and form, an acting principle of being (esse); and it is called efficient cause, or mover, or agent, or that from which change begins." He stresses that since all the other causes seem to be finite there needs to be a distinctive first principle where these others find their origin. This particular first cause is responsible for bringing being into existence, called the act of "creation." Further, this created act was brought about by pure goodness desiring perfection of all being. (This of course negates the possibility of evil being its own entity. It is also an impossibility that God could desire such an act of evil to take place.) This Necessary Being wills all that could possibly be. This absolutely necessary being is for Avicenna not only the ultimate cause of all things but is also a personal being who knows all that proceeds from him. To this extent, therefore, Avicenna effects a harmonization between philosophy and the religious beliefs of Islam.

The World

God is a necessary being that cannot not exist. Creation emanates from God necessarily. In God knowing himself, He effectuates the first intelligence, which is not a necessary being considered in itself but only a possible being. Any being other than God is not necessary of itself, in its nature, but receives its necessity from God alone. Avicenna maintains that in creatures there is a difference between essence and existence. Essence here stands for nature, which is possibility, which does not include existence. If a nature exists, it must be explained by something other than itself. In short, existence is accidental to essence or nature.

A Ten–Sphere Cosmology

By borrowing some Neo-Platonic premises and a ten-sphere cosmology, Avicenna furthers his argument to prove that this necessary first Cause created a whole series of intelligences and ten cosmic spheres controlled by them. Whatever is essentially One can create immediately only one effect (called Intelligence). The Neo-Platonic principle here is that it produces a superior angel-type called an Intelligence. This Intelligence is necessarily coming from and is in relation to its Cause. Because the Intelligence is a thinking being, creating is a function of thinking. Thinking is creating and God necessarily thinks, since He is a necessary Being. Therefore, there is a necessary emanation from God of ten Intelligences (Angels) which control the various spheres of the universe and the last of which (called Agent Intellect) forms the four elements of the cosmos and by which the human mind (possible intellect) is informed of all truth.

The Agent Intellect, called the "Giver of forms," in turn creates four elements in the sublunary world and individual souls. Here it is constantly emitting all possible forms that are received in matter suitably disposed in human intellects. Only individual things in the sensible world are contingent—coming into and going out of existence. However, their existence is not due to the will and providence of God but rather due to matter. Even though God transcends the entire series of Intelligences, he can only know things possible or in general, not in particular and not providentially extending details into creation. (It should be noted that many scholastics, including Muslim philosophers, would oppose this doctrine of Avicenna.)

The Nature of God

Avicenna's God was a pantheistic necessary Being from whom a serial creative force of ten gods followed with absolute necessity. Avicenna's chain of gods is necessary and these gods create all below them. This is unlike the Christian God who created freely and who is directly responsible for the existence of everything else that exists. His God is the pantheistic Agent Intellect (Active Mind) in all other minds which have only possible (passive) minds (unlike Aquinas who held each finite person has his own finite agent intellect).

The difference between essence and existence in creatures provides Avicenna with the great ontological difference between creatures and God. God is wholly aloof from the world, neither knowing things (other than himself) nor caring about them, and perhaps not the cause of other things either. Avicenna wants both to insist on the ontological difference between God and creature and to put God in contact with the world. This contact or relation to the world introduces the problem of the one and the many. God's immediate influence can be kept to a minimum, while his mediated influence has total scope. Avicenna's theory of emanations is productive of angels and of celestial spheres, to the tenth intelligence, the agent intellect, whose name is the angel Gabriel.

His View of Human Beings

The cause of the first created being must be love experienced by this being and the Supreme Perfect Being. This love expresses itself in a desire to emulate the Perfect Love, equal in everything to its Cause, except that it is secondary. Its intelligence subsists in perfect cognition of its Cause. Thus, creatures owe their actual existence to this first necessary being.

Avicenna posits that a human being is an empty space incapable of perceiving anything with his senses, including his own body. He would only know his existence as a spiritual soul but would not know of the existence of his body because he could not perceive it. This shows that man's body is alien to his essence being distinct from the substance of his soul. This spiritual being independent of a body is capable of surviving death, hence, is immortal. The animation of a body is an extrinsic accident of the spiritual essence of the soul, the form. According to Avicenna, each man possesses his own spiritual

soul endowed with involuntary bodily functions, sensitive, and intellectual powers being the highest and capable of knowing. It can only know through the cooperation of his sense power with the Agent Intellect for the purpose of grasping essences in their pure non-accidental characteristics.

Human beings, as well as animals, are animated and move at will. Their animation is from the force of its soul which generate actions of the will. This force is a form of a matter making it a body and a perfection in the sense that it perfects its kind by accompanying its specific purpose. Avicenna conceives the soul as the form of the body but stipulates it as a function not as a nature. Regardless, the soul is something that animates a body as to what it does not what it is. The nature of the soul does not require knowing about the body in order to understand its nature since the essence of a man can be conceived without association with the body. His essence in a sense is an image, a substance endowed with a plurality of powers. These distinct powers evidence themselves in distinct operations.

There are three distinct powers: the nutritive and generative power common to both plants and animals; the power of perception, imagination, and voluntary motion belonging to only animals; and aptitude powers to know, invent, speculate, and distinguish, such as between good and evil, common only to man. Thus there are three kinds of souls: the vegetative, associated with organic natural bodies and vital to their existence; the sensitive soul, allowing organic bodies to perceive and move at will; and the human soul, allowing the organic body to deliberate, act, contemplate, and apprehend universals. The human soul is endowed with active powers having control over the body, moving it based upon its own judgment, and speculative powers, also called “habitual intellect,” which is defined by Avicenna as “the intellect which understands every time it wants to understand, without having to work in order to acquire knowledge.” This intelligence, coming from the outside by a spiritual nature, above human nature is called the “given intelligence.”

The Soul and Man’s Chief End

Avicenna identifies the human soul with the human intellect. He describes the soul as a self-sufficient intellectual substance needing only a body in order to actualize itself. Hence, it can be stated that according to Avicenna, souls are intelligible in their own right. The soul conserves in its

memory images of singular things. To learn is to acquire the perfect aptitude, coupling itself with the Intelligence in act, so as to receive from it the simple intellection from which other forms will follow in an orderly manner in us, adding to the reflections of our soul (V, 6). The soul is a ruling body through the agency of the heart, not the brain. The function of the brain is to prepare the spirits enabling the body to feel and to move. Thus, the psychology of Avicenna is inseparable from his metaphysics.

The human soul is able to form universal and intelligible ideas and concepts and from there proceed from the unknown to the known through judging and reasoning. In addition, the "theoretic intellect" is only proper to the human soul where it can judge truth from error, good from evil, possible from impossible, and necessary from unnecessary, seldom going beyond what is probable or basing its decisions on opinion alone. Since this "theoretic intellect" deals with matters of speculation, it is the "practical intellect" that deals with matters of the actions applied to certain problems associated with human conduct reasoned by the theoretic intellect. Overall, there is a co-working of the theoretic, practical, and the body and corporeal powers of the soul for outworkings of the bodies functions. There is a closeness of destiny of human souls with the Agent Intellect, their immediate creator and source of purest perfection and joy, namely, intellectual knowledge. After death, souls find their salvation, not in God but in this Agent Intellect. They are then united forever with this Intellect in proportion to the progress made prior in this life.

Muhammad believed in the resurrection of the bodies. This cannot be demonstrated by philosophy but is known only by revelation. This same revelation pronounces fleshy pleasures for good and corporal punishments for bad deeds which will be received after death in the future life. However, philosophers, disagreeing with this position, expect a higher degree of an appropriate state of wellbeing. Man's ultimate end is to be conjoined to the lowest separate Intelligence which for man is the source of all light. A moral life, including political life and a respect for the religious law established by the Prophet, is a necessary preparation for this reward.

His Influence

Avicenna's psychology and epistemology influenced William of Auvergne and Albert the Great. His metaphysics impacted Thomas Aquinas. But his pantheistic misinterpretation of Aristotle was successfully countered

by Aquinas. He had a massive influence on Islamic culture, being their greatest thinker. He too was not an orthodox Muslim but belonged to the Sufi sect, a mystical pantheistic offshoot of Islam infected by Plotinian thought.

Many of the thirteenth-century Christian theologians found Avicenna's doctrine interesting—a universe of essences distinct from their existence, a technical description of the universe, the immortal human soul distinct from the body, illuminations from higher Intelligences, and a universe whose cause was a Necessary Pure Being. All of these positions will be further reinterpreted by Christian theologians of the thirteenth century. However, Avicenna had challenged Christian theologians concerning belief in human free will in a world created by a Necessary Being.

THE RISE OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

In the ancient world, Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.—c. A,D. 40), a sincere Jew himself, attempted to demonstrate that Greek philosophy and Jewish religious tradition were compatible. To him, genuine philosophy was found in the Platonic tradition. He accepted the divine Logos as the intermediary between God and the world.

Jewish philosophy did not show signs of flourishing until it was reawakened in the Islamic world in the Middle Ages. In both the Islamic and Jewish religious tradition there was an agreement on one thing—a transcendent God and divine revelation. Since there was a coexistence of philosophy with Islam, why could there not be this harmonizing with the Old Testament and the Law? Since the Jews were not outcasts from Islamic society at this time, it was natural that the intellectual trends found in Islam could carry over into Jewish circles.

Jewish philosophers had less influence on the scholastics as compared to the Islamic counterparts. However, there were two Jewish thinkers that did make an impact in the Middle Ages. They were Solomon Ibn Gabirol and Moses Maimonides. The starting point for Jewish speculation was essentially the Old Testament and the rabbinic commentaries, especially the Talmud. In comparison, Muslims did not reject the Old Testament per se (though they believed it had been corrupted) whereas the Jews and Christians alike rejected the Qur'an. Only a small portion of Jewish philosophical and theological literature became known to the scholastics. However, in the twelfth century, there were several series of proofs for the existence of God that were worked out by these Jewish philosophers.

AVICEBRON (SOLOMON IBN GABRIOL) (C. A.D. 1020 - 1070)



Background

Solomon Ibn Gabirol was the leading Jewish Neo-Platonist and Spanish thinker of the eleventh century, known also by his Latin name Avicebron (or Avencebrol, Avicembron). He was born in A.D. 1020 and died in 1070. He lived in Zaragoza, Spain. His parents died when he was young. He was a philosopher/poet. His works passed Neo-Platonism to Europe as Philo did to the Orient. Avicebron was mistakenly thought to be an Arab because of a work that he did in the Arabic dialect. His philosophy was Neo-Platonic in nature coupled with influences made upon him from the Old Testament scriptures. He wrote a book on Ethics titled *The Importance of the Moral Qualities.* His main work was *Fons Vitae* (*The Fountain of Life*).

His Metaphysics

Avicebron believed that all creatures, including angels, are composed of form and matter. Only God lacks composition. There are two kinds of matter: Gross, or visible matter such as is in the world around us and in our bodies and spiritual, or invisible matter such as angels and human souls have. This presence of spiritual matter within material beings explains how there can be many of them in the same "physical" species. In addition, this postulate also accounts for the possibility of change within these species. This is the principle of individuation in angels. Each human being is composed of universal matter and a universal form coupled with the addition of other forms, such as "animality" or "humanity," that make it unique in itself. Lower or more general forms are inferior to particular forms. Scholars would call this

the doctrine of plurality of forms, explaining the metaphysical structure of created being. This also explains change in finite things. Later, most Franciscans adopted this view (as St. Augustine did earlier). Aquinas rejected it, insisting that it is a contradiction (to speak of immaterial matter).

Like other Neo-Platonists, Avicebron believed that God was unknowable. He held that God created a universal being composed of universal form and universal matter. This universal being immediately clothed itself with added forms which diversified it and, hence, made many different types of beings in the universe. Each individual being is made up of matter and a number of forms which give it its genus and species. The form of corporeity puts all bodies into the genus of body. Less general forms are added to make it animality and humanity (human being).

There is a hierarchy of beings depending on their degree of generality. The more general forms are superior to more particular ones. Lower forms are contained in higher forms (e.g., body is contained in animal and animal in man). The higher the form, the more numerous are the inferior forms in it. The higher the form, the more unity it has. This is called the "plurality of forms" with a platonic bend (and was adopted by many).

His View of Ethics

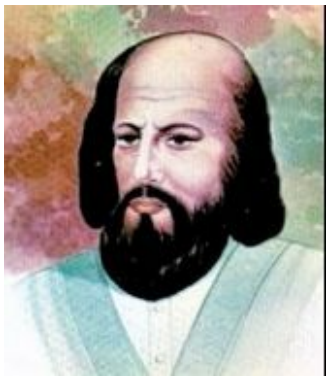
His work on *The Improvement of the Moral Qualities* was called by "a popular manual of morals." It was composed by Avicebron at Zaragoza in A.D. 1045, at the request of some friends who wished to possess a book treating of the qualities of man and the methods of effecting their improvement. The book is original in two ways. First, he attempted to systematize the principles of ethics independently of religious dogma. Second, he stressed the physio-psychological aspect of ethics. His fundamental idea was the correlation and interdependence of the physical and the psychical in respect of ethical conduct. His central ideas are that the qualities of the soul are made manifest through the senses; and these senses in turn are constituted of the four humors. The humors can be modified one by the other and the senses can be controlled and the qualities of the soul be trained to do good or evil. In order to do this, a person must know its peculiarities, study himself as he is, closely examine his character and inclination, habituate himself to the abandonment of whatever attracts him to the physical and temporal. He must aim at the spiritual which effort itself is blessedness. A man's ability to make such an effort is proof of God's goodness. He arranged the virtues and vices in

relation to the senses with each sense becoming the instrument, not the agent, of two virtues and two corresponding vices.

His Influence on Others

William of Auvergne referred to the work of Avicebron as *"Fons Sapientiæ"* (the fountain of wisdom). He spoke of Avicebron as a Christian, and praises him as a great philosopher. Alexander of Hales and his disciple Bonaventura accept the teaching of Avicebron that spiritual substances consist of matter and form. The most zealous proponent of Avicebron 's views on the universality of matter is John Duns Scotus. The main points of disagreement between Avicebron and Aquinas were: (1) the universality of matter, Aquinas held that spiritual substances are immaterial; (2) the plurality of forms in a physical entity, which Aquinas denied; and (3) the power of activity of physical beings, which Avicebron affirmed. Aquinas held that Avicebron was wrong in transferring the theoretical combination of genus and species to existence. This, he believed, led to the false conclusion that in reality all things are constituted of matter and form.

AL GHAZALI (C. A.D. 1058 - 1111)



Background

Al Ghazali was born of Persian decent in A.D. 1058 and died in 1111. At the age of thirty-six, he left his position in Baghdad and spent several years in spiritual exercises and journeyed on many pilgrimages to Muslim shrines. He is a contemporary of St. Anselm. His name is often rendered Algazel in English. He was a Sufi Muslim philosopher, cosmologist, and mystic of Persian origin. He was a popular Muslim teacher and debater. After 1095, he disposed all of his wealth and adopted the poor life of a Sufi mystic.

His Writings

In his work titled *Intensions of the Philosophers*, he summarizes the positions of Al Farabi and Avicenna and, in addition, in his other work titled *Incoherence of the Philosophers* he critically attacks these men's philosophies. He wrote *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* in which he shifted Islamic thought from Greek metaphysics to occasionalism. He wrote more than seventy books on the sciences, philosophy, and theology including*: Rescuer from Error; Proof of the Truth; Revival of Religious Sciences; Aims of Philosophers; The Incoherence of the Philosophers; The Incoherence of the Incoherence; Criterion of Knowledge in the Art of Logic; Touchstone of Reasoning in Logic; The Correct Balance*. In his work *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, he attempts to blend the Muslim doctrine of predestination and divine causality with mysticism. In this work, he argued that human reason was unable to prove the thesis of the eternity of the world, not allowing more human freedom, but maintaining the doctrine of God's universal causality. His position on cause and effect is simply a defense of one event following

another, mistaking regular sequences for necessary causal relations attributing to secondary causes, which are attributed to God alone.

His Philosophy

Ghazali attacked the falsafa (eighth to eleventh centuries) or Muslim philosophers like Avicenna and Al-Farabi who drew intellectually upon the Ancient Greeks. His autobiography *The Deliverance from Evil* recounts how his epistemological skepticism was resolved by a mystical "light which God Most High cast into my breast" (William James used this in his famous work *Varieties of Religious Experience*). His encounter with skepticism led him into occasionalism wherein God acted directly on the mind on the occasion of a sense experience and not by a natural causal interaction. He argued that the world is temporal and finite against the Aristotle's eternal universe. He insisted that this world is best of all possible worlds God could have created (Which Leibniz later used in his Theodicy).

His View of Physical Science

He held a scientific methodology based on demonstration and mathematics. He is responsible for the Ash'ari school of atomism which he argued that atoms are the only perpetual, material things in existence; all else in the world lasts only for an instant. Later, Nicholas of Autrecourt held that matter, space, and time were all made up of indivisible atoms, points, and instants and that all generation and corruption took place by the rearrangement of material atoms. His criticism of Aristotelian cosmology played an important role in the development of an independent astronomy over the next several centuries. His occasionalism held that physical effects were from God rather than from innate principles as Aristotle held. He rejected Aristotelian physics and acceptance of occasionalism (wherein God acted directly), and allowed astronomy to become a purely empirical and mathematical science. He believed the earth may be moving and this can be determined only on the basis of empirical experience, no speculation. In The Revival of the Religious Sciences, he classed medicine as one of the praiseworthy secular sciences in contrast to astrology which he considered blameworthy. He advocated the study of anatomy as a suitable subject for contemplation and drawing nearer to God (cf. Galileo and Kepler).

His Cosmology and Kalam Proofs for God

Al Ghazali formulated arguments for God's existence of the Kalam variety. One form of it reasoned that: (1) An actual infinite series cannot exist. (2) But an infinite temporal regress of events is an actual infinite. (3) Hence, an infinite temporal regress of events cannot exist. So, the world must have had a beginning and, therefore, a Beginner (Cause).

Another argument reasoned that: (1) An actual infinite series cannot be completed by successive addition. (2) But the temporal series of past events [up to today] has been completed by successive addition. (3) Therefore, the temporal series of past events cannot be an actual infinite. And, if not, then the universe had a beginning and a Cause of its beginning (God).

His Influence on Others

Al Ghazali had a significant influence on philosophers after his time. This includes the great Jewish Philosopher, Moses Maimonides. Also, he helped the integration of Sufism and Islamic Law, the rise of modern science, and even the development of Descartes methodological skepticism.

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY (C. A.D. 1033 - 1109)



Introduction

The invasion of the Vikings in the ninth and tenth centuries made serious intellectual endeavors nearly impossible. Also during this period, secular powers dominated the papacy. Some reformers had lashed out at the abuses in religious life, requesting men to return to the ideals associated with Christianity. One of these reformers was St. Peter Damian (A.D. 1007—1072) who looked at philosophy as a compromising influence to the Christian life. As far as he was concerned, Jesus had spoken and His Word should not be adulterated by curious speculation. Even Plato and the other "pagan" philosophers were considered tools of the devil. Damian's suspicion of philosophy was not without provocation. Theologians during this time elevated reason above the mysteries of faith, submitting the doctrines to the laws of logic, thereby accused of drawing conclusions that were seemingly heretical. Notwithstanding was the fact that all of the theologians of this time were making use of dialectics. By the eleventh century, reason began to spread its wings. In this context Anselm of Canterbury stood out as the well-balanced theologian/philosopher among his contemporaries. He thought was a precursor to the later scholastics of the thirteeth century and beyond.

His Life of Anselm and Works

Anselm was born in A.D. 1033 in Aosta, Northern Italy and later studied in France. After the death of Anslem's mother he wandered for about three years and eventuated in the Monastery at Bee. There he became a teacher and later an abbot in 1078. In 1093, he was summoned to England to be the archbishop of Canterbury. It was there at Canterbury that his years

became filled with controversy. Anselm had no real competence for leadership. Rather, he was more inclined to withdraw into a life of study and contemplation, leaning towards the life of a teacher. Nonetheless, he became a Prior in a Benedictine monastery and was later appointed archbishop of Canterbury (1093) in England.

His major works are *Proslogion, Monologion,* and *Cur Deus Homo*[*Why the God-Man*], and *On Truth, Free Will, and Evil*. His first work was titled *Monologion*, written for the monks at Bec and was completed in 1076. Next was the work called the *Proslogion*, written around 1077-78. Then in 1080 and 1085 there were three works: *De Grammatico, De Veritate, De Libertate Arbitrii*. Next the *De Casu diabolic*, written perhaps between 1085 and 1090. *Epistola de incarnations verbi* was begun in 1092 and completed in 1094. This work is more frequently referred to as *De Fide Trinitatis*. The work *Cur Deus Homo* was completed in 1098. And lastly, works *De Conceptu Virginali et de originali peccato* was written between 1099 and 1100.

The philosophical heritage of Anselm was Platonic. His theological mentor was St. Augustine. Anselm was a follower of St. Augustine even though he loved the dialectics and applied his keen, logical mind to his endeavors. His approach, however, was a pre-scholastic kind of philosophical theology. This is evident in his view of faith and reason.

His View of Faith and Reason

Anselm's major works can be classified as theological yet they can also be considered philosophical. Anselm took upon himself the task of proving the necessity of certain biblical doctrines through reason alone. Holding the position of a pure dialectician, Anselm went out to prove by 'necessary reason' the mysteries of faith in order to determine if they were indeed intelligible in and of themselves. Anselm, like Augustine before him, was a believer and accepted without waver whatever God has revealed. Attempting to determine the balance between faith and reason, Anselm, in the *Monologian*, states that he is seeking to base truth on arguments and the necessity of reason rather than specifically basing truths on Scripture alone. However, he concluded that the acceptance of Scripture as truth must be the starting point in this debate. If there is one common denominator in Christian thinking down through the ages it is found in Anselm's dictum: Philosophy (theology) is "Faith seeking understanding." Or, to put it another way,

Philosophy (theology) is "An attempt to render the credible intelligible." This is evident in his approach to proving the existence of God, especially in what was later called (by Immanuel Kant) the Ontological Proof for God which resulted from His meditation on who God is, namely "that than which no greater can be thought" (see below). However, once guided by faith reason can come to proofs for the existence of God which stand on their own without borrowing any premise from the Christian Faith.

His View of God and Creation

Either God is the cause of the universe, and made it out of nothing, or God is the very material from which the universe is made, which, according to Anselm, is absurd. In addition, if God were a part of the universe, he would have to have undergone corruption in order to have this imperfect and limited universe come from his substance. But God is absolutely perfect. Indeed, we could not know what is im-perfect unless we had an absolute standard of Perfection (God) by which to measure it.

Anselm was a classical theist such as that of St. Augustine. God is infinite, immutable, eternal, necessary, and absolutely perfect. He has infallible foreknowledge of all future free acts but this does not pace necessity on any of them since God—in His eternal Now—knew from all eternity with absolute certainty what every free creature would chose to do. Creation flowed freely from God's will and not of necessity from His nature. Creation is *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). That is, there was nothing outside of God before he brought it into existence. Prior to the universe's existence, it existed as a model, image, or rule in the thought of the Creator as the creative essence. The effects of his thoughts coming to be is through His word. God *said* and it came to be by that Word. Everything that exists came to be and continues to be only because He wills it to exist. God created everything, and from this act, everything is being sustained by his omniscient power. In order to describe this transcendent Being, names must be attributed to Him designating His positive perfections. This can be accomplished under two conditions: names only attributed to Him absolutely and not relative to creatures and second, only attributing those attributes that are most perfect.

Evil does not exist in itself but is a privation in a good thing which God made. God is in sovereign control of the universe, including evil, and he

will bring good out of evil. Both good and evil angels exist. The evil angels were not created that way; they became that way by a rebellious choice of their own will. They will eventually be punished and banished from the presence of God, as will evil men. Only the good angels and redeemed persons will be the blessed vision of God and live in eternal bliss.

His Proofs for the Existence of God

Anselm is best known for his ontological argument for the existence of God. The first work to address this was titled *Monologion* where he has several cosmological type arguments. This was followed by a second work titled *Proslogion*. It was the second work that is the one which actually contains the ontological proof. While Anselm was the head of the Abbey at Bec, he was requested by the monks to write the *Monologion*. Anselm's first attempts at demonstrating the existence of God were more Cosmological in type (see *Monologion*) with a distinctive Platonic twist. He offered an Argument from goodness. The *Monologion* establishes the existence of God solely on reason alone, not relying on anything contained in and by revelation. Anselm's reasoning is based upon two principles alone: first, experience leads to observable facts, and second, perfections originate from a supreme perfection. The starting point of the proof is the undeniable fact that there is goodness in things of which we desire thereby judging them to be good. Senses and reason draws one to conclude that there exists many good things that must have a cause, possessing a certain perfection itself.

An Argument From Goodness

This reasoning begins with the fact that: (1) Good things exist. (2) But the cause of this goodness is either one or many. (3) It can't be many, for then there would be no way to compare their goodness. For all things would be equally good. But some things are better than others. (4) Hence, there is one Supreme Good that causes the goodness of all good things.

Argument from Being

Anselm's arguments have a decided Aristotelian starting point in the real word, as opposed to a Purely Platonic beginning in the world of Ideas. He reasoned that: (1) Something exists. (2) But whatever exists, exists through nothing or through something. (3) However, nothing cannot cause something

(only something can cause something). (4) This something must be either one or many. (5) But it can't be many for they would have to be either mutualy dependent for their being (which is impossible) or one. (6) Therefore, there must be One Independent Being on which all other beings depend for their existence.

Argument from Perfection

In Anselm's *Monologium*, he develops a series of proofs of God's existence from degrees of perfection. This proof begins with degrees of perfection in the world, such as the perfection of goodness, existing in the universe. He then assumes that these degrees of perfection point to a being that is perfect and unlimited in itself. (Degrees of something implies an absolute of that thing.) Anselm offered a more distinctively Platonic type argument—the argument from degrees of perfection. He reasoned that: (1) Some beings are more nearly perfect than others. (2) But things cannot be more nearly perfect unless there is a wholly perfect (by which they are compared and judged to be more or less perfect). (3) Therefore, there must exist a most Perfect Being (God).

Anselm's Ontological Arguments (see *Proslogion)*.

As it turns out, Anselm had two forms of his so-called "Ontological Argument." The first form (sometimes called "Anselm A") argued from the idea of an absolute perfect Being. To Anselm, the proofs offered in the *Monologiom* were too complicated. He discovered a new argument which began simply with knowledge of the word "God" and the only meaning that can be ascribed to this word.

The Argument from the Idea of an Absolutely Perfect Being

Anselm is better known for his ontological argument in the *Proslogion*. This ontological argument has appeared in one way or another from his time up to the present. The doubter is presented with a God defined as that which no greater can be thought, as some greatest perfection. As Anselm was praying and meditating on who God is (faith seeking understanding), he came up with what has been the most intriguing and most controversial of all proofs for God existence. It can be summarized like this: (1) God is by definition that which nothing greater can be conceived. (2) But it is one thing to exist in the

understanding only and another thing to exist both in the understanding and outside the understanding (e.g., a painting existing only in the painter's mind as opposed to one both in his mind and on canvas.) (3) And it is greater to exist in reality than to exist only in the mind. (4) Therefore, God must exist in reality (if He did not he would not be the greatest possible being conceived).

The same argument in a negative form goes like this: (1) Nothing possible can be denied of the most perfect Being possible (conceivable). (2) Real (extra-mental) existence is possible for the most perfect Being possible. (3) Therefore, real existence cannot be denied of the most perfect Being possible. In short, when one begins to think or meditate on the concept of an absolutely perfect Being, it is literally inconceivable that such a Being could not exist.

The Second Form of the Ontological Argument

In the process of defending his first argument against criticisms of a contemporary Monk named Gaunilo, Anselm developed a second argument—this one from the idea of a necessary being. It can be stated like this: (1) It is logically necessary to affirm of a necessary Existent what is logically necessary to the concept of such a being. (2) But being or existence is logically necessary to the concept of a necessary being. (3) Therefore, it is logically necessary to affirm that a necessary Existent (God) really exists.

The same argument in a negative form: (1) It is logically impossible to deny what is necessary to the concept of a necessary Existent (for it would be contradictory to say that it is not necessary that it is necessary). (2) But real existence is logically necessary to the concept of a necessary Existent. (3) Therefore, it is logically impossible to deny real existence of a necessary Existent.

The difference between the arguments is that the first form of Anselm's argument is based on predictability of existence to an absolute perfect Being, and the second form is based on the inconceivability of the nonexistence of a necessary Being. The first form appears to be subject to some criticism to which the second is not, such as Kant's criticism that existence is not a predicate.

Criticisms of Anselm's Ontological Arguments

In Anselm's day, a Monk named Gaunilo replied that just because one can think of a perfect Island does not mean that it really exists outside his mind. However, Anselm pointed out that this is a false analogy since one can have a concept of a Perfect Island in is mind without one existing outside his mind. However, this is not so of a Perfect Being since it would not be an absolutely perfect Being unless it had being. Later, Immanuel Kant argued that "being" is not a perfection, as Anselm supposed. For "being" does not add anything to our concept of an absolutely perfect Being. It merely gives us an instance (or instantiation) of one. For example, a real dollar adds nothing to perfect the idea of a dollar in my mind. It only gives me an instance of one. Most modern philosophers have agreed with Kant on this point.

As for Anselm's second argument, it has had a longer and stronger history. It has been defended by modern philosophers like Descartes and Spinoza and contemporary philosophers like Norman Malcolm, Charles Hartshorne, and even Alvin Plantinga. Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant have been the greatest critics of it.

The heart of the arguments in favor of Anselm's second argument are: first, it does not view existence as a perfection and, hence, avoids, Kant's criticism. Second, just as one cannot conceive of a triangle without three sides, neither can one conceive of a Necessary Being without being. Hence, a Necessary Being must necessarily have being.

The response to this is that while a triangle cannot be conceived of without three sides, it does not mean that a triangle actually exists outside of one's mind. It simply means, that if a triangle exists (outside of the mind), then it must have three sides. Likewise, if a necessary Being exists (outside of the mind), then it must necessarily exist. But this does not prove that a Necessary Being actually exists (outside the mind).

Anselm on Truth

Anselm's epistemology is found in a book titled *On Truth*. He states that truth is most obviously found in propositions, and when it is true, it says what is, *is*, and when it is not, it says what is not *is not*. Truth then is found in correspondence or correctness found in propositions, in thought in to things, but it is limited to the intellect and mind alone. Ultimately, truth is based upon the divine Ideas which are one with God alone. Therefore, the universe is

governed by truth, and when it is found, leads back to God, the highest truth, where everything in the universe is ultimately indebted to him.

The Will and Liberty

Anselm calls the special truth in the will, the will's rectitude (better known as justice), making man just and upright in the sight of God. Anselm's usage of "will" has three meanings. First, it means the power of willing like sight means to the power of seeing. It is a self-determining power. Hence, it is the natural endowment of the soul inseparable from the man, exercising acts of loving, desiring, willing, and choosing. Second, the will is the inclination, the propensity, or affection of the power of the will. This is identified as one's permanent will. This will has two objects: the object of usefulness and the object towards justice. The third sense of the will is associated with the act of willing wherein lie the acts of choice manifesting the inclination of the will. This involves judgment and the decision of the will whereby presupposing knowledge according to evidence and reason.

Anselm devotes one of his treatises to the problem of freedom of choice and liberty in *De Libertate Arbitrii*. In it he recognizes that the human will has the power to choose or not to choose, act or not act, even regarding choices to sin. Like Augustine, he distinguishes the difference between free choice and liberty. Liberty does not include the power of sinning, whereas the true definition of liberty is the power of preserving uprightness for the sake of uprightness itself.

Man, created with the freedom of choice, chooses to commit sin, giving up his liberty and becoming a slave of sin. His choice was free, not coming from his liberty, since this liberty inclines him to do right. Even though man is a slave to sin, his natural freedom of choice is not destroyed. He is just unable to use it properly without the grace of God. In order for man to have freedom and happiness he must receive the divine gift of liberty from God.

Cur Deus Homo: Philosophical Theology

One of the best examples of a philosophical theology from the early Middle ages is found in Anselm's famous *Cur Deus Homo* (Why the God-

Man). His reasoning went like this:

Sin Puts Us in Debt to God

"What is the debt which we owe to God? Every wish of a rational creature should be subject to the will of God. Nothing is more sure. This is the debt which man and angels owe to God, and no one who pays this debt commits sins; but everyone who does not pay it sins." (Book I, XIX)

God is Just and Cannot Overlook Sin

"Again, if there is nothing greater or better than God, there is nothing more just than supreme justice, which maintains God's honor in the arrangement of things, and which is nothing else but God himself" (XIII). "Therefore God maintains nothing with more justice than the honor of his own dignity. Does it seem to you that he wholly preserves it, if he allows himself to be so defrauded of it as that he should neither receive satisfaction nor punish the one defrauding him." (Book I, XIII) "Even God cannot raise to happiness any being at all by the debt of sin, because He ought not to" (Book I, XXI).

We Cannot Pay Our Own Debt of Sin

"Listen to the voice of strict justice; and judge according to that whether man makes to God a real satisfaction for his sin, unless by overcoming the devil, man restores to God what he took from God in allowing himself to be conquered by the devil; so that as by this conquest over man he devil took what belonged to God, and God was the loser, so in man's victory the devil may be despoiled, and God recover his right. Surely nothing can be more exactly or justly conceived. Think you that supreme justice can violate this justice? " (Book I, XXIII). "If in justice I owe God myself and all my powers, even when I do not sin, I have nothing left to render to him for my sin" (Book I, XX). "Therefore you make no satisfaction unless you restore something greater than the amount of that obligation, which should restrain you from committing the sin" (Book I, XXI). "Moreover, so long as he does not restore what he has taken away, he remains in fault; and it will not suffice merely to restore what has been taken away, but, considering the contempt offered, he ought to restore more than he took away" (Book I, XI)

God Cannot Forgive Sins Without the Debt Being Paid

"Let us return and consider whether it were proper for God to put away sins by compassion alone, without any payment of the honor taken from him. . . . To remit sin in this manner is nothing else than not to punish; and since it is not right to cancel sin without compensation or punishment; if it be not punished, then is it passed by undischarged. [And] It is not fitting for God to pass over anything in his kingdom undischarged. . . . There is also another thing which follows if sin be passed by unpunished, viz., that with God there will be no difference between the guilty and the not guilty; and this is unbecoming to God" (Book I, XII). And truly such compassion on the part of God is wholly contrary to the Divine justice, which allows nothing but punishment as the recompense of sin. Therefore, as God cannot be inconsistent with himself, his compassion cannot be of this nature" (Book I, XXIV). "Therefore the honor taken away must be repaid, or punishment must follow; otherwise either God will not be just to himself, or he will be weak in respect to both parties; and this is impious even to think of" (Book I, XIII). Thus, "...satisfaction or punishment must follow every sin" (Book I, XV). "For, if it is unfitting for God to elevate man with any stain upon him, to that for which he made him free from all stain, lest it should seem that God had repented of his good intent, or was unable to accomplish his designs; far more is it impossible, on account of the same unfitness, that no man should be exalted to that state for which he was made" (Book I, XXV).

Only The God-Man Can Pay the Debt of Sin

"But how, then, shall man be saved, if he neither pays what he owes, and ought not to be saved without paying? Or, with what face shall we declare that God, who is rich in mercy above all human conception, cannot exercise this compassion?" (Book I, XXIV) Thus, ". . . the restoring of mankind ought not to take place, and could not, without man paid [paying] the debt which he owed God for his sin. And this debt was so great that, while none but man must solve the debt, none but God was able to do it; so that he who does it must be both God and man. And hence arises a necessity that God should take man into unity with his own person; so that he who in his own nature was bound to pay the debt, but could not, might be able to do it in the person of God.... Moreover, you have clearly shown the life of this man to have been so excellent and so glorious as to make ample satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and even infinitely more" (Book I, XVIII (a)).

"No man except this one [Christ] ever gave to God what he was not obligated to lose, or paid a debt he did not owe. But he freely offered to the Father what there was no need of his ever losing, and paid for sinners what he owed not for himself" (Book II, XVIII (b)) Thus, "It is sufficiently proved that a man can be saved by Christ. . . . For either by Christ or by someone else can man be saved, or else not at all. If, then, it is false that man cannot be saved at all, or that he can be saved in any other way, his salvation must necessarily be by Christ" (Book I, XXV).

A Brief Evaluation of Anselm's Thought

There are many positive features of Anselm's philosophy. First of all, his view of faith and reason—as faith seeking understanding—set the pattern for Medieval Christian thought after him. Second, Anselm provided some very convincing and provocative arguments for the existence of God. Third, his stress on the laws of logic and rational thought and their application set the pace for later Medieval philosophy that came to fruition in thinkers like Thomas Aquinas. Fourth, Anselm correctly defined truth as correspondence to reality and strongly defended the objective and absolute nature of truth. Fifth, Anselm properly defined free choice as a self-determined action, thus preserving it against fatalism.

The biggest problem Anselm posed was is ontological proof(s) for the existence of God.

The first form of the argument (from the idea of a perfect Being) was soundly critiqued by Immanuel Kant who insisted that existence is not a perfection. It adds nothing to the concept of an essence. Existence is just an *instance* of an essence. Most philosophers since Kant have agreed.

The second form of the ontological argument (from the idea of a Necessary Being) has had a more enduring existence. However, it too is not without criticism for it too appears to assume the existence of something in order for it to work. It is really only claiming, that "If there is a Necessary Being, then He must exist necessarily." But it does not prove there is a Necessary Being. It is like saying, "If there is a triangle, then it must have three sides." But it does not prove that a triangle exists outside of a mind. Nonetheless, Anselm's argument seems to have value in establishing that if God exists, then He must be a Necessary Being. For that is the only way a

Necessary being could exists is to exist necessarily. So, at best the ontological argument establishes an essential *attribute* of God, but not His *existence.*

PETER ABELARD (C. A.D. 1079 - 1142)



Life and Works

Peter Abelard holds a prominent place in history of medieval theology, helping to organize it as a science. He was born in A.D. 1079 in Le Pallet, a small village in Brittany, France. Early in his life, he was interested in the things of the mind. When he was fifteen he studied under Roscelin of Compiegne (c. A.D. 1050—1125), French philosopher and theologian, considered as the founder of nominalism) and perhaps may have also studied under Thierry of Chartres (twelfth century philosopher) as well. He studied first under Roscelin and then under William of Champeaux (c. A.D. 1070—1121, French philosopher and theologian who studied under Anselm) who also studied under Roscelin. Both would become victims of his dialectic skill. He died in 1142. As a child, he learned quickly and eventually moved to Paris. He had a systematic mind and helped to organize medieval theology as a science. His famous *Sic et Non* [*Yes and No*] led to the later medieval method (used by Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* as: "It would seem that," "on the contrary," and "I answer that").

Abelard first started lecturing at Melun, then at Corbeil, and then later at Paris. Turning to theology, he studied with Anselm of Laon. Being combative in nature, he later taught theology in the cathedral school at Paris. His career was interrupted with his love relationship with the lady Heloise by whom he had a child, thus resulting in him retiring to the abbey at St. Denis. Later, after stirring up more trouble, he withdrew to Nogent-sur-Seine, then founding a school of Le Paraclet for the students who came to him for a retreat.

He was later accused of heresy by St. Bernard and was condemned by a synod as Sens in 1141. After an appeal to Pope Innocent II, he was further condemned and prohibited from lecturing. After making some sort of retraction, he died in peaceful retirement at the Cluniac monastery of St. Marcel-sur-Saone in 1142.

His discussions with St. Bernard and William of St. Thierry on the Trinity and Incarnation loomed large on the theological horizons of the twelfth century. He was one of the most concrete and colorful figures in the Middle Ages (see his letters, his accounts of his life and calamities, and his correspondence with Heloise). All of his purely philosophical writings are concerned with logic. He continued the speculation of Aristotle, Porphyry, and Boethius with deepened and extended insights. Most striking is his nominalistic approach to logic (only William of Ockham will go farther in tying logic to a nominalist philosophy).

Abelard's works fall into two main categories: logical and theological. Furthermore, his works fall into four groups: the *Introductiones parvulorum* (1114) which are explanations on Porphyry, Aristotle, and Boethius; the *Logica ingredientibus* (1120) which are further glosses on Pophyry and Aristotle; the *Logica nostrorum petitioni* (1124) which is an elaborate explanation on Pophyry's *Isagoge*; and the *Dialectia*. Among his theological writings are *De unitate et trinitate divina* (around 1120), *Sic et non* (1122-1123), *Theologia Christiana, Theologia* (1124-1136), *Expositio ad Romanos, Scito teipsum* (his ethics), and *The Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian.*

Abelard's first work was the result of requests by students and as a criticism towards Anselm's writings but was later burnt because of a supposed charge of Sabellianism against Abelard (where a modalisitic concept of God is promoted). God the Father represented in the Old Testament, the Son in the New Testament, and the Spirit in the present). He insisted that he not be found guilty of heresy. His undoing was based upon his teaching without license or papal authority, not the accusation of heresy. As punishment for the alleged offense, he had to publically recite the Creed.. After he requested a papal investigation in hopes to reform the monastery of moral corruption, Abelard's life was in danger. He left the place in 1131 (or 1132), intending to flee to Paris and it is here that his *Historia calamitatum* ends.

His View of Epistemology

Abelard believed that sense perception and understanding are two distinct actions of the soul. Senses use bodily organs, and understanding does not use a bodily organ, nor does it need a material thing as its object. There are two types of mental images: (1) general and confused – representing no one individual in a class distinctly, but all generally (i.e., man): (2) particular and detailed images – representing one individual alone (i.e., Socrates). Universal concepts are nothing else than confused mental images. Abelard drew no distinction between images and concepts; indeed he defines an image as a "confused conception of the soul." Universal concepts are formed by abstraction – simply concentration of attention upon one aspect of a thing to the disregard of other aspects of the same thing. These abstractions do not represent their object fully, but they are not false or empty. We focus on this substance, this body, this animal, as we consider the individual. Abelard reduces abstraction to the well-known psychological fact that we can turn our attention to various aspects of one and the same object.

Abelard had no conception of St. Thomas' doctrine, according to which the intellect abstracts an essence, existing individually and materially in the world of nature, and gives it a new mode of universal and immaterial existence within itself. Abelard possessed neither the metaphysics of being nor the doctrine of the agent intellect required for the elaboration of the Thomistic notion of abstraction.

There are abstract conceptions in God as well as in us, for God conceives beforehand the Ideas of the things he creates. But God's universals are different from those we form through the senses. By means of them God knows clearly all the individuals he creates in the same state. The ultimate explanation of universals is consequently to be found in the divine Ideas. As concepts they exist only in the intellect, but they signify real things. Universals signify the same individuals represented by particular concepts, although they signify them confusedly and indistinctly. Universals insofar as they are words, are corporeal and sensible, but their capacity to signify many similar individuals is incorporeal. Inasmuch as universals signify the forms of sensible things they exist in them, but as thy signify abstract concepts, like those in the divine mind, they are beyond the sensible world. Thus both Aristotle and Plato were right. Aristotle was correct when he insisted that universals exist in sensible things. But Plato was right because he held that

universals exist independently of the sensible world. Abelard's question, "If all the individuals signified by a universal ceased to exist, would the universal retain its meaning?" Would a rose still be a rose if no roses existed? Abelard's answer, "in that case a universal would lose its character as a universal, for it would not be predicable of many individuals. But it would still keep its meaning in our intellect, for it would still make sense to say, 'No roses exist.'"

Faith and Reason

Abelard was convinced that theology could use logic because he wanted to defend and understand the faith utilizing this most powerful weapon. He also saw the benefit of logic as a tool to refute heresy. Along with this defensive role, Abelard also believed that it can play a more positive role in regards to faith. He defines faith first in terms of intellectual ascent where the believer comes to know the meaning of what he believes. This faith comes from reason and yet it is balanced with a good opinion (*existimatio*) of things unseen. Faith is less than science but yet more than mere opinion. Abelard distinguishes three progressive modes of faith expressed by three phrases: first, the acceptance of the existence of God; second, a trust in God's words and promises; third, involves loving and cherishing God.

Abelard did not put reason above faith, nor separate the two. He wrote (to Heloise), "I do not want to be a philosopher if it is necessary to deny Paul. I do not want to be Aristotle if it is necessary to be separated from Christ. For there is no other name under heaven whereby I must be saved (Acts 4:12)." As a professor of theology, he was interested in teaching Christian doctrine to pupils so that it could be understood. He knew that the limited human mind cannot hope to comprehend the mysteries of faith. Words are meant to convey a meaning, and he sought the human meaning of sacred Scripture. That is why he was so concerned with words and their meaning and why he studied logic so passionately. Abelard contributed to the growing awareness of the domain of human reason and the world of nature, particularly in the field of logic and human reason. Thus he marks an important step forward in medieval philosophy. He did not teach in the monastic schools, which flourished in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but in the newer urban schools of the thriving towns of the twelfth century. He was a pioneer in the formation of the scholastic method – to lead his pupils by and orderly method to a rational grasp of the subject matter. His method was to read Scripture and state the

varying opinions of the Fathers, and then he tried to solve the problem in a way conformable to all the best authorities.

He followed this method in *Sic et Non* (Yes and No), which contributed to the formation of the scholastic method which was perfected by Thomas Aquinas. His goal was not the monastic contemplation of a St. Anselm or St. Bernard, but an orderly, rational understanding, worthy to be called scientific. In this he was the harbinger of a new age: the Age of the Schoolmen, or scholasticism.

The Doctrine of Universals

The oldest logician mentioned by John of Salisbury (c. A.D. 1120—1180, English author and educationalist) was Roscelin. Roscelin taught that general concepts were merely words (*voces*). Most historians call this his nominalism. In reference to existence, Roscelin maintained that on the one hand that there are individuals and on the other hand words designating these same individuals. These words have meaning but their meaning is not an actual existing being.

Abelard was a nominalist. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the ruling doctrine of universals was that of Boethius, who considered them to be realities. All through the twelfth century the battle raged between the realists and the nominalists , with Abelard in the middle of the battle. One of Abelard's first teachers, Roscelin (c. 1050—1123), was the leader of the nominalists. Roscelin considered universals to be merely spoken words (*voces*). He was accused of heresy for applying his nominalism to the doctrine of the Trinity. He denied it, and was not formally condemned. Another of Abelard's teachers, William of Champeaux (c. 1070—1121) was an outstanding realist, holding with Boethius, that universals are substance common to many individuals. William of Champeaux maintained that there is in all men one common essence. Abelard objected to this and in response argued that this led to absurd consequences. For example, if Tom and John had numerically the same essence then they would be the same man. If Tom was in Paris and John in London, then the same man would be in two places. Under Abelard's pressure, William of Champeaux abandoned his theory and claimed rather that in the member of species the same nature or essence is present "indifferently;" meaning that in two men their natures are similar but not identical. Abelard's own opinion of universals states that universality is to be

ascribed to words alone, more specifically, the logical content or meaning, not just the spoken sound, and neither to just things. After Abelard's attack he no longer said that individuals are essentially one in possessing a common substance, but that they are "indifferently" one. Abelard considered this doctrine a mitigated form of realism, closer to the truth than Champeaux's former doctrine , but only verbally different from it. Champeaux also said, that all things are one in their substance (and they have the same substance as God) and different only by their accidents. Abelard criticized Joscelin of Soissons (d.1151), who claimed that a universal is a collection of individuals. Abelard replied that this is impossible, for a species or genus is predicable of each individual in it, but a collection cannot be predicated of each individual in the collection (Plato is not the sum total of all men). Therefore, if only a part of the collection is predicated of each individual, then the collection itself is not a universal, for a universal is predicable wholly of many individuals. The conclusion of these criticisms is that a universal is not a reality or a thing. Everything is individual; there are no universal realities.

What then is a universal? Abelard responded by describing universals as a certain class of words (following Roscelin). But not simply words; they are words with meaning. They are not simply *voces*, but *sermones*; that is, names that function as signs. Abelard's definition of a universal is that which is naturally predicated of the many. Words and things are called universals. His definition for a particular follows that of Porphyry's: the particular is that which is predicated only of one. However, do universal words derive their meaning from things? It would seem that they do not, for, as we have seen, there are no universal realities or essences that they could signify. There are only individual realities, and no universal word signifies precisely any one individual. It would seem that universals have no meaning that is based in real things. Abelard points out that even though individuals have no essences in common, they do have common likenesses that serve as a ground for our universal names and concepts (i.e., Socrates and Plato are in the state of condition of being men). Individual things do not differ from one another because of their forms, instead, they are personally discrete in their essences. That which is in one is in no way to be found in another—whether it be its matter or form. The personal differences do not come from their forms. It is the diversity of the essences that the forms are found to be different. He is careful to explain that a state is not a "thing"; it is simply the individual itself in its likeness to other things. We can call the states of things the cause of

universals even though they are not things. Abelard believes that each individual differs from every other be its essence or form and not simply by its accidental properties. Things are substantially and not only accidentally different. This brings Abelard to the point where it seems clear that things cannot be called universals, whether they are taken singularly or collectively. The only alternative is to ascribe universality to words alone where the grammarian distinguishes common nouns from proper ones and the logician makes the distinction between universal and particular words. A universal word can be predicated to the many, such as "man", and the particular would be conjoined with the particular man, like Socrates.

Universal words seem to stand for no clear meaning of anything except to just commonly name the thing or provide some common likeness. The understanding of universal words occurs when the mind creates a mental image of a likeness of a thing even though the thing may no longer exist. This would even include the likenesses in understanding, having no inherent corporeal image. Hence, universality is achieved at the expense of distinctiveness. In sum, Abelard's universal words signify the common form which is present in the mind caused by a common conception formed in accordance with the nature of things.

His Ethics

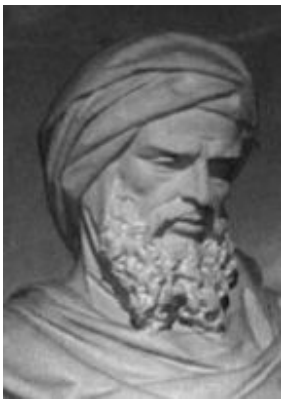
The central problem of ethics is the foundation of the morality of acts. Vice is the inclination to consent to what is not right. Of itself, vice is not a sin but rather an inclination to sin. Sin is devoid of substance, a sort of non-being, not even consisting in the inclination of the will. Therefore, there must be a distinguishing factor between the goodness (or malice) of the act and the intension associated with it. Good (or evil) is somewhere between the spontaneous inclination of the will and the act itself. The act itself has no real moral value itself if separated from the intention that dictates it. This is why it is possible that a good act can be done with bad intention as well as a bad act can be done with good intention as well. This is why the act, whether good or evil, is judged moral or immoral based on the intention of the act.

Abelard's nominalism stressed the reality of the individual. This resulted in his main concern; the individual whom he considered to be a moral agent with personal responsibility and guilt. His ethical views are contained in a treatise titled, *Ethics, or Know Thyself*. The aim of this little work is to

determine the basis of good and bad acts. No act is good or bad in itself. What, then is sin? —It is simply consent to evil. The morality of an act depends solely on the intention with which it is done. An act done with a good intention is always good; an act done with a bad intention is always bad. God does not weigh what we do, but the spirit in which we do it. Sin in the proper sense, consists solely in bad intention. Original sin is not a sin for us but only for Adam and Eve. We share in the punishment of the sin but not in the guilt. For an intention to be good it must correspond to God's will and intention. God had revealed himself to Christians, who must conform their wills to them.

Abelard had surmised that the pagan philosophers were far closer to Christianity compared to the Jews since Jewish law was largely an external matter whereas the pagan philosophers noticed the importance of inner justice, chastity, and contempt for this world. Abelard thought that non-Christians as well as Christians have access to God's laws. In his *Christian Theology* he teaches that God granted a revelation to the great pagan philosophers who lived holy lives and came very close to Christian truth. If a person is ignorant of God's will and acts contrary to it in good faith, he does not sin. Abelard's ethics is a radical subjectivism, for the only criterion of morality it recognizes is intention. Later medieval theologians, like St. Thomas Aquinas worked out a balanced moral doctrine, taking into account both the subjective and objective sides of morality. Abelard's ethics is consistent with his doctrine of universals. Since there are no essences or natures in things, universals have no objective basis in them but only in the divine Ideas. Similarly the morality of human acts is not founded upon an objective moral order in nature but upon the will or intention of God.

AVERROES (C. A.D. 1126 - 1198)



His Background

After Avicenna, Averroes was one of the great philosophers of the Muslim Empire. The names *Averroes* is a Latinized distortion of the Arabic name *Ibn Rushd*. He was born in Córdoba, Spain, and died in Marrakesh (Morocco). He came from a family of legal scholars and became a judge. In 1169, he was appointed to a judicial post at Seville where he held the office of judge. From 1171, he was employed in a similar position at Cordoba. From 1182 until 1195, he appears to have practiced as a physician to the caliph at Marrakesh. He also wrote on matters of philosophy, theology, astronomy, and medicine. Ibn Tufail (c. A.D. 1105—1185, writer, novelist, physician, philosopher, theologian) inspired him to write his famous commentaries on Aristotle. He studied under Muslim philosophers Ibn Bajjah (d. A.D. 1138, logician, philosopher, poet, scientist) and Tufail (both mystics). He was an Aristotelian rationalist. He, like many in his time, believed that Aristotle was the author of a book called Theology which was a compendium of Plotinus' writings. As a result, Plotinian pantheistic ideas were read into Aristotle

His Writings

Averroes's ambition was to understand and teach the philosophy of Aristotle, and wrote: "I believe this man was the rule of nature and the model that nature produced to show the ultimate in human perfection." Under the caliph of Marrakesh, Averroes was commissioned to write a series of commentaries on Aristotle that would earn him the title of the "Commentator" in Christian circles. Since his commentaries were so close to the text of

Aristotle's, he invariably separated himself from the more Neo-Platonic views of Al Farabi and Avicenna. He denies the theory of emanation while retaining the notion of hierarchy of Intelligences. He wrote on law, logic, grammar, psychology, politics, music, medicine, astronomy, geography, mathematics, physics, celestial mechanics, and theology. He penned some sixty-seven books (some 20,000 pages), twenty-eight of them were on philosophy. He wrote commentaries on most of Aristotle's works and on Plato's *Republic*. His most important philosophical work was on *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*. He defended philosophy against al-Ghazali's claims in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* (that Aristotelianism, especially as presented in the writings of Avicenna, was self-contradictory and an affront to the teachings of Islam). Averroes had to defend Aristotle's philosophy against two foes in the Muslim world: philosophers Al Farabi and Avicenna. These two had distorted the Aristotelian philosophy by intermingling its teachings with religious doctrines. The Muslim theologians considered Averroes as an enemy of religion and accused him of heresy, banishing him from Cordova. Against the formidable accusation of Moslem theologian Algazel, he composed a work titled "The Incoherence of the Incoherence" in order to uphold the truth of philosophy.

His Philosophy

Avicenna believed that there is no conflict between Aristotelian philosophy and theology. The universe is eternal, but the soul is not; it was created but will last forever. All individual humans have their own passive intellect. But there is only one universal active intellect in which all share (pantheism).

What emerged from the controversy with Islamic Al-Ghazzali against Averroes' doctrine was his explanation regarding the relationship between philosophy and faith. Averroes was attempting to convey that the statements of truth in the Qur'an were not as exact and accurate as they could be. Since the Qur'an addressed itself to all, not just the learned, philosophy would enable one to fully understand the truths found in the Qur'an. Philosophy would become in a sense the measure of faith. This religious truth coupled with philosophical reason would later be known as the "double truth theory" and is described as follows: a proposition could be true in philosophy and demonstrated by reason while a contrary proposition could be simultaneously true in theology substantiated by revelation. (However, Averroes did not adhere to this theory because he explicitly holds to non-contradictory truths.)

Since the Qur'an addresses three groups of men, it is here in its versatility that proves its miraculous character; providing symbolic meaning for the uninstructed and hidden meanings for scholars as well. In order to blend these three groups, Averroes posited three classes, dividing and positioning men according to their rank of understanding. The first class, men of demonstration, is where the majority reside. These people live by imagination rather than by reason, making them dependent on others thereby directing them to live virtuously. The second group, men of dialectic and having beliefs similar to the first, are the theologians who want reasons for their faith. The third group, men of exhortation, are the philosophers, the elite of mankind, knowing truth in all its purity which is found in the dialectics of the second group. In all practical purposes, these three groups use different approaches in order to get to the same truth, where ultimately, they will agree with one another. There are two kinds of truth: one based in faith and the other in reason. This was later dubbed the "double-truth" theory in which contradictions can both be true, but Averroes did not hold this radical distortion of his view.

Those who understand the philosophical meanings of the text should interpret it philosophically; for it is there that lies the true meaning. If conflict arises, then interpreting the text philosophically should lead to harmony. There are three principles that should be followed in interpretation. First, a mind should never go above its capability. Second, one should never go to the lower classes of minds in search for interpretation because proper interpretation is reserved for superior minds. Third, philosophers have fallen into error when superior knowledge was untimely communicated with inferior minds resulting in the use of hybrid methods of oratorical art and dialectics, resulting in the creation of heresies. Therefore, an order of interpretation needs to be established. At the summit is philosophy, providing absolute truth and knowledge. Next is theology, the domain of dialectic interpretation providing mere probability. And at the bottom is religion and faith which is left to those who find these two necessary.

When philosophy and religion arrive at polar conclusions, Averroes, a Moslem, recognized the reality of prophecy and placed the Prophet at the pinnacle of human knowledge, because, according to the Prophet, religion and philosophy coincide.

He did believe that existence precedes essence. This form of metaphysical "existentialism" was embraced by Thomas Aquinas who asserted that God is Pure Existence (Esse). In fact, God's essence is to exist for Existence is His very essence.

His Metaphysics

Averroes' metaphysics follows Aristotle: being is substance as an individual existing thing. He considered all substance as a being, either as a substance or as an accident which participates in the being of the substance. Being as a substance can be an accident, or a quantity, or a quality, etc. Being cannot be predicated univocally. Intelligibility is essential to beings and what is essential exists only through a necessary efficient cause. In order for logic to apply to the real, sensible things must also be intelligible. However, Averroes thought that the Platonists were incorrect to believe in the existence of separate Ideas, but were correct to think that sensible things hold their intelligibility from some intelligible beings.

Averroes did not think that universals existed in themselves, outside of individuals. To ascribe reality to a universal was to assume that each individual possessed a part of it or assume that it was present in each individual. Both reasons he concluded were absurd. The right conclusion is that a universal is not a substance but rather is a work of the intellect providing universality to forms. Universals only exist in the intellect and as accidents exist only in substances.

God's Existence

Averroes, following Aristotle, concurred that it was possible to prove the existence of God. This could only be accomplished through analysis of movement in natural philosophy. However, this Divinity that is proven is not the transcendent God of Avicenna but is rather the Intelligences themselves; chief among them identified as the Prime Mover. This Prime Mover itself, also pure in act, cannot be moved. Following the lead of astronomers, Averroes concludes too that there must be thirty-eight of these eternal uncreated Pure Acts or Intelligences having the Prime Mover as high chief of the hierarchy.

The World

These thirty-eight movers have nothing to do other than to exist. The movement of each stems from the desire it feels from the Pure Act on which it depends. This Pure Act gives to each of them their essence. Of the thirty-eight, five are designated for each of the superior planets (Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars), five for the Moon, eight for Mercury, seven for Venus, one for the Sun, and one for the world's firmament. Averroes surmises that the world has always existed and will continue to do so, having an eternal duration. If they ceased to move, their associated planet(s) would lose its (their) form. It is the immobile First Mover, the first separate Intelligence, who ensures the unity of the universe and its very being. The first Principle is the cause of the forms and the movement of all the rest. Lastly, there is the Agent Intellect which is the last of the celestial Intelligences and the ruler of the sublunary world illuminating the passive intellects of men who are disposed to receive knowledge from it. The forms of living beings, made up of the four elements, is given to them by this Agent Intelligence.

The Soul

Man's soul according to Averroes is one of these corporeal forms and through his own awareness he recognizes his personal insufficiencies. To remedy the deficiencies, he turns towards his cause, the Agent Intelligence, striving to join the cause through knowledge and desire. This union with the agent Intelligence is possible in a universe where the agent Intellect is the same for all humankind. It produces intelligible knowledge in individual souls into their passive intellect, their imagination. When the agent Intellect illumines the passive intellect, a third intellect arises called the material intellect. This material intellect is not corporeal, but is pure intellectual potentiality. Averroes teaches that this contacting of the Agent Intellect with the passive intellect causes an accessibility. This accessibility is where the agent Intellect specifies itself in a soul. The Agent Intellect is one available for all men, but at the same time, according to Averroes, men are denied their own possible intellects. Men are just a higher form of animal with corruptible powers along with the body. However, this passive intellect perishes upon the death of the body (form) since it too is corporeal. This is why man's immortality cannot exist because there is no substance associated with this possible intellect nor is it attached in any way to the body. All that is eternal belongs to the agent Intellect and is only immortal by its immortality.

His Influence

Averroes' influence spread throughout the time of the Middle Ages then into the period of the Renaissance, continuing even to the beginnings of the modern times. Averroes influenced both Moses Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas. However, Aquinas refuted his pantheistic misinterpretation of Aristotle which strongly influenced thought before 1200. Averroes' argument in *The Decisive Treatise* freed science and philosophy from theology (thus being a precursor to modern secularism). Aquinas' respect for him is manifest in that he did not use his name but simply referred to him as "The Commentator" and to Aristotle as "The Philosopher."

Theologian and philosopher Duns Scotus (c. A.D. 1265/1266—1308) calls Averroes "that accursed Averroes" and Italian poet and humanist Petrarch (c. A.D. 1304—1374) nick-names him "a mad dog barking against Christ and the Catholic religion". Renaissance art depicts Averroes groveling at the feet of Aquinas. However, even though Aquinas does refute Averroes' errors, he learned much from him. For the schoolmen, including Aquinas, Averroes was considered "the Commentator" on Aristotle. Later, Albert the Great (c. A.D. 1206—1280, see below) found Averroes' teaching of sensible things, sensations, purification of species by the agent Intellect, and cognition, of particular interest. In part, he, as well as others, seem to think that his doctrine of abstraction was quite possibly a correct one.

MOSES MAIMONIDES (C. A.D. 1135 - 1204)



Life and Works

The most famous Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages is undoubtedly Moses ben Maimon (c. A.D. 1135—1204), also known as Moses Maimonides. Maimonides was born in Spain in A. D. March, 30, 1135 and died in Egypt in December 13, 1204, just two decades before Saint Thomas Aquinas was born. Born in Cordoba, he left his native town when it became overrun by the fanatical Muslim sect called the Almohades. In 1159, he and his family crossed into North Africa, settling first at Fez, then moving onward near Cairo. He was educated by his father and Arabian masters. Aquinas and others knew him as Rabbi Moses. He was the greatest Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages and was highly respected by scholastic philosophers. He was a physician, medical writer, and an authority on Jewish law, undertaking to systemize and codify it. His most famous work is *A Guide for the Perplexed*. In writing *Guide to the Perplexed*, he attempts to answer the conflict between faith and reason, between Scripture and philosophers and to make use of the philosophy of Aristotle to interpret Scripture. The *Guide for the Perplexed*, which he never considered a systematic exposition, does not deal primarily with metaphysics but rather with Jewish theology. This work addresses minds already trained in philosophy and the sciences but uncertain how to reconcile the conclusions of science and philosophy with the literal meanings of Scriptures. This work is both neo-platonic and primarily Aristotelian. His strong monotheism permeated all his thought.

Rejection of the Literal Interpretation

Rabbi Moses was Platonic in his philosophical orientation. He rejected the literal interpretation of the Bible as the root of all evil in theology. He believed the Bible speaks in figurative and anthropomorphic language. Taking it literally leads to polytheism or defective monotheism. If held that if one wishes to leave the realm of empirical metaphor and "rise to a higher state, [namely], that of reflection, and truly to hole the conviction that God is One," then he "must understand that God has no essential attribute in any form or in any sense whatever. . . . Those who believe that God is One, and that He has many attributes, declare the unity of God with their lips, and assume plurality in their thoughts."

Language about God

When discussing the attributes of God, one needs to determine what the word "God" means. In his *Guide to the Perplexed*, he states that there is no multiplicity in God. When we predicate a variety of attributes to God, we should be attributing to God the multiplicity of God's effects. When positive statements are made about God, such as "He is wise," the term "wise" is used equivocally, thus denying something else about Him.

Maimonides believed that there were five possible ways to positively attribute something to an object. He denied the applicability of the first four to the monotheistic God of Judaism and opted for the last one. First, an object is described by its definition. Second, an object is described by part of its definition. Thirdly, an object is described by something different from its true essence, by something that does not complement or establish the essence of the object. Fourthly, a thing is described by its relation to another thing. Fifthly, a thing is described by its actions.

Maimonides maintains that proofs for God's existence involve basic propositions. He lists twenty-five premises that have been already demonstrated by Aristotle and his followers. Further, he adds another premise: the eternity of the world. He makes this point clear that he believes that time had a beginning and that philosophy has never succeeded in proving that the world did not exist from eternity. The proof for God's existence should be independent of the question whether the world did or did not exist from eternity. If the existence of the world is used as a premise for God's existence, saying that God created the world, then if it were found that the world has existed eternally then the God's existence could be found as false.

We Know God His Actions, not in His Essence

He explained speaking of God by His actions this way: "I do not mean by 'its actions' the inherent capacity for a certain work [as the ability of a carpenter to build] . . . but I mean the action the latter has performed [the act of building]. Only this kind of predication can be made of God." For "this kind of attributes is separate from the essences of the thing described, and, therefore, appropriate to be employed in describing the Creator, especially since we know that these different actions do not imply that different elements be contained in the substance of the agent, by which the actions are produced . . ." For all actions flow from the essence of God and not from any alleged accidents superadded to his essence. In brief, the only things appropriately attributed to God are actions that flow from his essence but are not in any positive way descriptive of his essence.

Biblical Language is Anthropomorphic

Having eliminated philosophically any positive descriptive attributes of God, Maimonides is faced with the innumerable biblical passages that predicate many things of God in a positive way. His answer, "The Torah speaketh in the language of man." That is, biblical language is anthropomorphic. The so-called relations between God and creatures "exist only in the thoughts of men." Thus, terms Wisdom, Power, Will, and Life are applied to God and to other beings by way of perfect homonymity, admitting of no comparison whatever.

His key to the elimination of God's positive attributes was that existence is of His very essence. He wrote: "It is known that existence is an accident appertaining to all [caused] things, and therefore an element superadded to their essence….but as regards to a being whose existence is not due to any cause…existence and essence are perfectly identical; He is not a substance to which existence is joined as an accident, as an additional element." Consequently, "God exists without possessing the attribute of life; knows without possessing the attribute of knowledge… " and so on. In brief, God does not have any attribute appropriately applied to him. God does not have existence in any way similar to that of a creature; God does not have wisdom as a creature does; God's wisdom is infinitely different.

The Way of Negation

How can this be known, since there is no positive knowledge of the essence of God? The answer is found only in negative theology (via negativa). The negative attributes of God are the true attributes . . . while the positive attributes imply polytheism. . .” Negative and positive attributes both exclude what would otherwise have not been excluded. Negative attributes do not provide us with any direct information about the essence of the object being described. “They are necessary to direct the mind to the truths that we must believe concerning God (without implying plurality) they convey to man the highest possible knowledge of God.” Hence, “. . . by each additional negative attribute you advance toward the knowledge of God. . . .” Attributing positively to God the perfections found in creatures would imply imperfections in God.” Hence, “The man who affirms an attribute of God, knows nothing but the same; for the object to which, in his imagination, he applies that name, does not exist.”

God’s True Essence is Unknowable

Maimonides believed that only the Tetragrammaton (YHWH, Yahweh) indicates God’s true essence, and its meaning cannot be known. In brief, God can be understood only in terms of his own essence and no human being can know the essence of God. Thus, negative theology is the only protection of monotheism. God has no intrinsic causal relation to his creatures and hence cannot be named from perfections found in them.

For Maimonides, an attribute of God is either affirmative or negative. Scripture does reveal one positive name that is not derived from God’s actions in relation to his creatures. This sacred name of God designates His very nature. This was revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14 in the Old Testament Scriptures and is identified as the Tetragrammatron—illustrated by the four Hebrew letters, YHWH. Maimonides says the meaning of this word is “absolute existence” where God is revealing His pure necessity.

Ethics

The role of ethics is to secure the welfare of the soul and the welfare of the body. This is only achieved through political association since man is by nature political. The true law, the Mosaic Law, brings to man the benefits of the soul and body through the abolition of reciprocal wrongdoing and through the acquisition of noble and excellent character. In other words, the perfecting

of man in society through observing the Law of Moses as understood in Jewish tradition. Here is where Maimonides attempts to fuse the Mosaic Law and philosophical ethics. He is ultimately looking for the causes and reasons for the commandments thus achieving the welfare of the soul and body. This acquisition comes via knowledge, especially knowledge about God, striving to a higher and more perfect morality.

In the *Guide for the Perplexed*, he takes up the problem of human perfection which he divides into four kinds: first, and also the lowest, is the acquisition of wealth; second, perfection of the body; third, moral excellence; fourth, speculative knowledge of God. Only the fourth is where the intelligence of man, leading to a metaphysical knowledge of God, can lead him to his true perfection.

PETER LOMBARD (C. A.D. 1100 - 1160)



His Background

Peter Lombard was born to a poor family in Lumellogno in Northwest Italy around A.D. 1100. His name implies that he was born in Lombardy. He probably studied first at Bologna before going to Rheims and then proceeding to Paris where he taught at the cathedral school. He was first educated in Italy and then Paris where he became a professor ("Magister") around 1145. He attended the Council of Reims in 1148. He was ordained a priest by 1156, and by 1159 he was Bishop of Paris. He died in 1160.

His Writings

Lombard wrote commentaries on Psalms and Paul's Epistles, but his most famous work was *Four Books of Sentences* [also called *Magister Sententiarum*] which became the standard textbook on theology of the time. In this work, he gathered together a vast number of quotations and opinions of the Church Fathers, especially St. Augustine, and to a lesser degree quotations and ideas from others like Anselm of Laon, Abelard, Hugh of St. Victor (c. A.D. 1096—1141, wrote works on theology, mysticism, philosophy, and the arts) and Gratian. The Sentences were arranged into four books dealing respectively with God, creatures, the incarnation and redemption, and the sacraments. Since this work was a compilation, historians do not consider Lombard as an original thinker. Nonetheless, he is quoted by famous thinkers such as St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Ockham. The *Sentences* treats the Trinity in Book I, creation in Book II, Christ, the savior of the fallen creation, in Book III, and deals with

the sacraments, which allegedly mediate Christ's grace, in Book IV. It is a compilation of biblical texts, along with related passages from the Church Fathers and medieval thinkers on virtually the entire field of Christian theology. It brought together commentaries on all the theological issues in a systematic order, with attempts to reconcile their different viewpoints. Later thinkers (e.g., Aquinas) wrote their Masters thesis on the *Sentences.*

English translations include: *The Sentences*. Book 1: *The Mystery of the Trinity*. Trans. by Giulio Silano. Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies (PIMS), 2007. *The Sentences*. Book 2: *On Creation*. Trans. by Giulio Silano. Toronto, PIMS, 2008. *The Sentences*. Book 3: *On the Incarnation of the Word*. Trans. by Giulio Silano. Toronto, PIMS, 2008. *The Sentences*. Book 4: *The Doctrine of Signs*. Trans. by Giulio Silano. Toronto, PIMS, 2010.

His Doctrines

The *Sentences*, though at times controversial, were considered as a recognized stepping stone in the academic rigors in the medieval university. This work though is primarily a theological work with themes being philosophical in nature. Peter Lombard was never condemned as heretical, but one of his teachings was controversial and unorthodox. He identified charity (love) with the Holy Spirit (in Book I, distinction 17). He held that when the Christian loves God and neighbor, this love literally is God and is taken up into the life of the Trinity.

His Influence

All major late medieval thinkers used Lombard's *Sentences* including Albert the Great , Thomas Aquinas, and William of Ockham. Even the Reformers employed it. Martin Luther wrote glosses on the *Sentences*, and John Calvin quoted from it over 100 times in his *Institutes.*

WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE (C. A.D. 1180/1190 - 1249)



His background

William of Auvergne's career, extending over the first half of the thirteenth century, during the time when the universities were feeling the full impact of the philosophies of Aristotle and Avicenna. William was primarily concerned with the implications of Avicenna's philosophy as it influenced Christian thinking. With his philosophical and theological foundations based on Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm, he considered Avicenna's philosophy a serious threat to Christian faith.

William was born in Aurillac, France between 1180 (or A.D. 1190) at Aurillac. He was a student, teacher, and finally Bishop in France for nearly half a century. William was a master of theology at the University of Paris, who in 1129, became bishop of Paris. He was a member of the commission appointed by Pope Gregory IX to study and correct the writings of Aristotle because it was at this time that the writings of Aristotle were suspicious. William's treatment of Aristotle is that he seems unaware of the true line of demarcation between the doctrines of Aristotle and that of the Islamic thinkers, who often attributed to Aristotle what he indeed did not hold. For example, postulates of Aristotle's view were that from one God there immediately proceeds the first intelligence (similar to Islamic Platonism) all the way to the continuation of the tenth intelligence, that of the creation of corporeal matter and human souls. His theological thought was rooted in Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm. He was made the Bishop of Paris in 1220. His main concern was the impact of Avicenna's pantheistic Plotinian views on Christian thought. William believed that Christian "doctors" could not afford

not knowing about the other sciences. He saw that one could not effectively combat ideas they were not well versed or competent in discussing. He died in1249 leaving a considerable theological work. (Aquinas was 25 at the time).

He was a lively, witty, sometimes sarcastic Frenchman who was a good story teller. His writings follow a patristic style of continuous exposition. His works include the following traetises: *De primo principio* (a.k.a *De Trinitate*, about 1228), the *De anima* (1230), *De universe* (between 1231 and 1236), and *Magisterium divinale* (1231—1236).

His Criticism of Avicenna

William's criticism focused on Avicenna's notions of God and creation —the existence of the First Cause (God) and the ten intelligences, all of whom are creators. The First Cause creates only one immediate effect, the first Intelligence. This first Intelligence then creates a subsequent intelligence, and so on. The series ends with the tenth intelligence who in turn is the creator of human souls and matter. By implication, the First Cause is therefore not the immediate creator of the world. Neither is he a free creator but creates necessarily as a result of his self-knowledge, nor freely as a result of the decision of his will.

According to William, Avicenna's misconception posits that the First Cause is not omnipotent and free thereby limiting the First Cause to only one immediate creation. Avicenna argued that only one creature could proceed from the First Cause whereas William counters and says that this places limits upon the Creator thus confining his knowledge to only one thing—the immediate effect—making God seem stupid. William defended the Christian notion of God as a free creator against the Greco-Arabian teaching of God as a limited and necessary cause of the universe which exalted unity at the expense of God's other attributes. (As a consequence, the Muslim philosophers did not see how God could directly produce a multiplicity of creatures.) William would show that God was the actual infinite perfect First Cause and the sole and immediate creator of the universe. Therefore, his denying that there are Intelligences separating God from human souls would ultimately result in humankind seeing God face to face in the next life.

Auvergne's criticism of Avicenna was that he ignored God's omnipotence, omniscience, and freedom. This allowed God (1) To create more

than one thing (like a builder); (2) To create freely and not of necessity; (3) To know more than one thing; (4). To create all things directly; (5) To govern the universe without animated heavenly bodies dragging them in dizzy rotations like donkeys harnessed to mill wheels.

His View of God

One of the most remarkable achievements of the thirteenth century was the idea of God as pure existence, or existence itself. This notion would later find its best expression in Thomas Aquinas.

God has eternally and freely willed that the world should begin in or with time. God created the world from nothingness. This results in not only the dependence of creatures on God but their continual operations must also depend on God as well. In short, all that creatures do must depend on the Divine will. God did not create creatures to leave them to themselves. In the universal distribution of divine power to produce, it is God alone who is the real cause. Creatures are only the channels through which production can take place but only when God so wills and as he wills. It is here that it can be seen that William is defending the freedom of God against the Greek concept of God's stifled nature.

God is pure existence itself. There are two types of being: being that receives its existence from another, and being that exists by itself. Since, we receive our existence, then there must be a Being (God) who does not—First Being. Being can mean two things: (1) an existant (noun: a thing, entity) or (2) existence (verb: act of existing). God is being in the second sense—a pure Act of existing. God essence and existence are identical. He is existence itself pure and simple. William considers God to be simple (indivisible) because his existence is not separate from essence, neither in thought nor in reality, thus making God indefinable. If one speaks of God's existence and asks the question *quid sit*, there will be no answer therefore resulting in no *quiddity*. In God, his essence and existence are the same as illustrated in Exodus 3:14 when he says of himself, "He Who Is." Every creature has an essence distinct from its existence where its existence is accidental to its essence. Its existence is not necessary and is dependent upon God's will to create it.

His View of Creature

Man's being is the closest point of contact between himself and God. Because of this closeness, William argues that there is an existential dependence that creatures have upon God for their very existence. In creatures, their existence and essence are really distinct (anticipating Aquinas' real distinction). God is related to creatures as their Life-giver. God gives being to all things since all creatures are existentially dependent on God. God alone possesses existence as such; creatures exist only insofar as they participate in this existence. The world is essentially unstable and temporal. It is a reflection or image of God, a book of symbols in which God can be read.

There are no real efficient causes in the world; at best it has only instrumental causes that channel God's causality (Note: Aquinas opposed this and argued for real secondary causes in the world).

William compares the relation of the soul and the body to the relation of divine *esse* to created essences. God gives being to all things as the soul gives life to the body. This is why the existence of beings is always accidental to them. God, the unique supreme existence, is the cause of all other existences. This does not take away from the diversity of existences which is not essential to them.

His View of the Human Soul

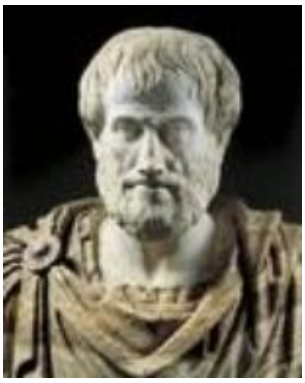
Auvergne held a Platonic view of the soul. William's notion of the soul is both Platonic and Augustinian describing the soul as a spiritual substance residing in the body (as a pilot in a ship). The soul is a spiritual substance that abides in a body like a pilot in a ship. The body is a prison in which soul is held captive. The soul is the whole essence of man. The body is only an instrument though which the soul acts. The soul needs body because of its weakness to command matter. The soul vivifies (gives live) to the body. Following Aristotle, William says that the soul is the form of the body being a wholly simple spiritual substance free from all composition. In the human soul, its essence is the immediate cause of its operations of knowledge and of the will. Because the soul is one and indivisible, the possible intellect and an agent intellect (promoted by Aristotle and Avicenna) cannot be attributed to the soul. When speaking of the intellect, it must be conceived as the very essence of the soul exercising its own knowing activity.

In the human soul, everything comes from within. Stimuli that the body experiences from without are under the internal action of divine light. William postulated a universe that was already filled with intelligible forms that were directly readable by the intellect. Species are not just real in the universe, they are reality itself. (E.g., Socrates is essentially the species "man" and whatever is added to Socrates is only individual accidents.) Thus, the human soul is in the presence of intelligible by its thought just as it is in the presence of sensible by the senses where the intelligible are the causes of the sensible.

His View of Human Knowledge

Human ignorance is due to original sin. The object of senses is only accidents. The role of the intellect is to know the essence of things (which it never knows clearly and distinctly). Only when released from the body and illuminated will the mind know the essence of things. Abstraction is merely the short-sightedness of the intellect. Man has no need of an agent intellect distinct from his own soul. The senses have as their object the accidents of things: color, taste, sound, and so on. The intellect's task is to penetrate to the substance of things (where the accidents are the external coverings). The intellect is simply the soul activating its knowing activity where it is stimulated by the sensible world. The intellect instantaneously conforms itself to external things to then produce within itself abstract ideas of these things through a sort of mimicry. The soul knows on the occasion of the body being stimulated by the world of senses, producing a natural mimicry as a monkey does to those around it. God gives the soul this innate ability to give birth to ideas. The origin of this innate capacity of the intellect is God illuminating and fertilizing the intellect by his own Ideas. The intellect can, so to speak, "read" intelligible truths and rules of morality from God's Ideas likening it to a "living book." Like Augustine, William means that all our knowledge of truth presupposes the immediate action of God upon the human soul as its interior light and teacher. God is like a mirror in which the mind can read both mental truths and moral rules. This interior light is not God but is His action on the mind as its teacher. The mind is completely dependent on God for its knowledge as the soul is for is being. God is not the agent intellect (as most Neo-Platonist's held) , but He does function in its place. Therefore, according to William, by ascribing to God the light by which the intellect knows, it makes every creature dependent upon God for its being.

ROBERT GROSSETESTE (C. A.D. 1175 - 1253)



Background

Robert Grosseteste (c. A.D. 1175—1253) is Oxford University's first great scholar as well as its first chancellor. His influence shaped the intellectual atmosphere beyond the Middle Ages.

He was born in Suffolk, England in A.D. 1175. He was trained at Oxford and (some say) at Paris. He taught the Franciscans at Oxford. He was a theologian, philosopher, mathematician, and scientist. He became the Bishop of Lincoln. He taught the Bible including Genesis, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Paul's Epistles. He was an early Christian forerunner of the scientific method stressing experimentation (later developed by Francis Bacon in 1620).

His Writings

Robert Grosseteste was almost a contemporary with William of Auvergne (c. A.D. 1180—1249). Both were secular priests, professors, and bishops, even though one represented England and the other France. However, their works are quite different in style—the one writing *summa's* and the other composing shorter works. At Oxford, Grosseteste brought to the surface the influx of the new philosophical writings (as William of Auvergue had previous done in regards to similar writings that were infiltrating the University at Paris). Grosseteste's writings are known for their preponderance of mathematical and scientific topics making his writings seem rather original and independently unique. In him, Augustinianism seems to live on in a less adulterated form as compared to his contemporaries. Grosseteste's works can be generally thought of as the combination of the metaphysics of light and the

philosophical considerations concerning the nature and source of intelligible light. This postulation can be said to go back to Plato's "intelligible sun" but only in an indirect way. He wrote commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics, Posterior Analytics,* and *Metaphysics*. He translated Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* from Greek to Latin. He wrote *De Sphera* (on astronomy) and *De Luce* (on metaphysical light).

In *De luce seu de incohctione formarum* (*On Light and the beginning of Forms*), he basically asserts that the first bodily form is light (some call corporeity) since it is light by its very nature that diffuses itself in all directions. In his two philosophical essays, *De unica forma amnium*, he asks the question if God is the single form of all things and in *De ordine emanandi causatorum a deo* he deals with the emanation of creatures from God. In the first essay, he employs Augustine's reinterpretation of the Platonic Ideas and carefully denies that God is the form of all things in the sense of their inherent form. In his second essay, he distinguishes between the eternality of God and creatures in time in order to remove the confusion that infers that a creature might possibly be eternal. Here he states that only the Son is coeternal with the Father, not measured by time. Angels and souls, however, are measured by something other than time which is the measure of corporeal things.

His Philosophical View

Unlike Paris, Oxford was never strongly influenced by Aristotle. Oxford was Platonic/Augustinaian from the beginning. His scientific method: (1) Began with induction of observable particulars; (2) Then it generalized them into a general law; (3) Then it attempts to verify or falsify them by experimentation; (4) After this, it jumps to the conclusion that all are like this (called, "universal experimental principle") which states something about the very nature of things; (5) Next, it deduces particular occurrences from this law. The basic assumption: Nature operates uniformly and in the simplest manner possible.

Grosseteste believed that scientific knowledge by nature is incomplete. Certainty in knowledge comes from mathematics (more so than metaphysics). Nature can be properly understood only through mathematics because physical motion is the diffusion of light which can only be understood by geometry. The aim of natural science is to arrive at the laws by which things operate in accordance with their natures or forms. Universal natures

exist in things as reflections of the eternal Ideas in God's mind. The human mind, while it is in its current condition, is so defective that it cannot grasp the nature of things with any certitude. Certitude is only possible with the aid of divine illumination and an intellect purified from the corrupting influence of the body. Science contributes only to our knowledge of the formal cause (laws), not efficient or final causes. The universal forms (laws) are a reflection of the eternal Ideas in God's Mind which are understood only by divine illumination. Truth is conformity with these Ideas (thus he unites the empiricism of Aristotle with the Idealism of Plato).

His View of Human Beings

Grosseteste held to an Augustinian dualism of soul and body. The soul is trapped in the body (which hinders its knowledge). The soul is the body's mover and ruler where, but when it is attached to the body, it is weighed down. The intelligence is so darkened and cannot know and understand fully by itself. Once the soul is rid of the body, it possesses perfect science through divine illumination. When released from the body, the soul can see truth in its purity. The soul is the higher part of man and moves and rules the body. When one knows the truth, the mind then participates in the light that is the Word of God since the mind is itself a participation in light allowing one to know the truth.

According to Grosseteste, God acts upon the world through light. Man's soul, like a little world, occupies the same place that God does in the world. Grosseteste affirms that the soul acts upon the body (only in the sense where a more noble thing—the soul—can only act upon a lesser noble thing —the body) via the way of the intelligence. This intelligence is not an act of the body and does not need any corporeal instrument in order to act. Light then too is the intermediary between the soul and the body.

His Metaphysical View

The object of metaphysics is more noble than science. But certitude is hindered by bodily senses and faulty imagination. Only the elite few by divine illumination can attain certitude in metaphysics. God is the primal, invisible, an uncreated Light. Light is the first corporeal form. It is also the source of the body's activities—the intrinsic principle of their movement and actions. When light reaches the limit of its diffusion, it produces a finite sphere of the

universe and is thus reflected back toward the center. There is a hierarchy of light (God, angels, souls, matter), diminishing in light (splendor). The original creation was of matter and a point of light which diffused and rarified until it was spent in the finite spherical universe. When light reaches its extremity, it reflects back to its center. This reflected light (lumens) produces nine heavenly spheres and below them the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. Material things are composed of matter and light which actualizes it. This light is not, according to Grosseteste, physical light that can be seen but rather this light in itself is an unextended point of energy manifesting itself in visible light. Like the Jewish philosopher Ibn Gabirol, Grosseteste thought that one substance can have several substantial forms. Bodies are first informed by light, then the elements, plants and animals, and finally, via the intellect, souls of men. Since light extends in three dimensions, it has bodiness or corporeity (this follows Ibn Gabirol).

One substance can have several substantial forms. Bodies are first informed by light (which gives extension in three dimensions), then by the elements, plants, and animals, and finally by an intellectual soul. Matter itself is passive until acted on by light which is the intrinsic principle of movement. Since light diffuses itself in straight lines and angles, geometry is crucial to science. The roots of his view are Neoplatonic and Augustinaian, but the fruit of it is found in modern science (which uses both math and experiments).

ST. BONAVENTURE (C. A.D. 1221 - 1274)



Background

The thirteenth century saw Augustinianism flourish, particularly in the Franciscan order. The finest product of this order was St. Bonaventure. Giovanni (John) Fidanza, Bonaventure was born about 1217 near Viterbo. It is thought that he studied the liberal arts from 1236 to 1242. In 1243, he entered the Franciscan Order studying theology until 1248 under Alexander of Hales (c. A.D. 1185—1245, important thinker in the history of scholasticism) and others. He received his Bachelor of Scripture in 1248, the Bachelor of the Sentences in 1250, and the *licentia docendi* in 1253. He was master of the Franciscan school in Paris from 1253 to 1257. In 1257, he was admitted as a master of the faculty of theology in the university at the same time that Aquinas was admitted. He became a cardinal in 1273 and died in Lyon in 1274 (the same year Aquinas died).

Among his works is his commentary on the *Sentences* authored by Peter Lombard, the Disputed *Questions on the Knowledge of Christ, The Trinity, Evangelical Perfection*, along with the *Breviloquium*, the *De reduction Actium ad theoloiam*, and the *Itinerarium mentis in deum*, being his most important works. He also wrote commentaries on Scripture. In addition, there are the publications of his lectures titled *De decem praeceptis* (1267), *De domis spiritus sancti* (1268), and the In *Hexaemeron* (1273).

Tradition holds that Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas were friends. Both men, though different in their approaches to theological and philosophical problems, were declared Doctors of the Church. They used and

developed philosophical ideas to further their theological work even though it may seem at times that their views were opposing. In general, Bonaventure depends upon Augustine rather than Aristotle whereas Aquinas owed a great debt to Aristotle. Bonaventure and Aquinas were almost exact contemporaries, both dying the same year (A.D. 1274). But philosophically they were on opposite ends of the spectrum. Bonaventure was platonic and Augustinian. Aquinas was Aristotelian. St. Thomas was Dominican and Bonaventure was a Franciscan.

Bonaventure was foremost a theologian, but he was conscious of the new type of learning known today as scholasticism—a philosophical system based on Aristotle and the Church Fathers. He considered that the proper task of theology was to render the intelligible credible by adding reason to it. Bonaventure proposed that the subject matter of theology "is the believable turned into the intelligible" because of the addition of reasoning. Primarily a theologian and secondarily a philosopher, he states, for example, that theology begins with God, the supreme cause, with whom philosophy ends (*Breviloquim*, I, 1.) meaning that the theologian presupposes a belief in God and his revelation whereas the philosopher starts with finite things arguing for the existence of God in his quest for his desire towards known reality.

The Early Franciscan School

In Bonaventure, Augustinianism experienced its "second spring." His view was not identical with the doctrine of St. Augustine himself, but it was basically the same and was certainly in the spirit of Augustine. But even before Bonaventure, Augustinianism experienced and renewal for it flourished particularly in the Franciscan Order. St Francis (d. 1226) had no intention of founding an Order devoted to study and teaching. Alexander of Hales (c.1185—1245) was an important factor in this development. He was a professor of theology at Paris when he became a Franciscan in 1236. He continued to teach as a Franciscan, and it became the custom to appoint a Franciscan to this chair. An immense *Summa* of theology, which Roger Bacon described disparagingly as "more than a horse-load," is traditionally ascribed to him.

In some respects a precursor of St. Thomas' *Summa* of Theology it contains many doctrines typical of the Franciscan school such as: (1) The existence of spiritual matter in human souls and angels (2) A synthesis of Augustinian illumination with Aristotelian abstraction; (3) The plurality of

substantial forms (e.g, vegetative and rational); (4) The doctrine of seminal principles (*rationes seminales*); (5) The notion of God as supreme Entity (*essentia*).

However, St. Bonaventure was the Franciscan school's finest flower. He brought into his theology and philosophy the poor man of Assisi's ardent love of God and burning desire for contemplative union with him. Traditionally, Bonaventure was a friend of St. Thomas Aquinas, with whom he taught at the university of Paris. In his encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, Pope Leo XIII particularly recommends the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, but he also gives special mention to St. Bonaventure.

Bonaventure's Philosophy

For Bonaventure, philosophy was done in the service of love. He did not separate his philosophy from his theology of his faith. He depends upon St. Augustine rather than upon Aristotle, while St. Thomas owes a greater debt to Aristotle and the Arabian philosophers. Plato rated higher than Aristotle in his estimation because Plato turned toward heavenly things. Augustine by the grace of the Holy Spirit was the master of both science and wisdom. Devotion and love were always his primary concern; knowledge and science came second. Like all of the great mystics, his works abound in the language of the heart. More perfect than rational investigation is knowledge through love (*dulcis cognitio*), in which the mind savors the divine sweetness. "The best way to know God is through the experience of sweetness; this is more perfect, excellent and delightful than through rational inquiry." Dominicans, he says, give themselves first to speculation and study and second to devotion (*unction*), while Franciscans give themselves first to devotion and second to speculation. For Bonaventure the true purpose of philosophy is to foster devotion and to help us reach a mystical union with God. For Bonaventure, philosophy is knowledge of the things of nature and the soul naturally innate in man or acquired by his own efforts. Theology is knowledge of heavenly things based upon faith and the revelation of the Holy Spirit. He considers that our reason is so darkened by original sin that without the light of faith it is bound to fall into error.

For Bonaventure, the true purpose of philosophy is to advance devotion to God in helping one reach a mystical union with Him. Philosophy is the knowledge of things in nature whereas theology is the knowledge of

heavenly things based on faith and revelation of the Holy Spirit. It is only when philosophy renounces its self-sufficiency, allowing itself to be guided by faith, that it enters into Christian wisdom. Therefore, faith should precede philosophy. Following closely after faith, comes theology, then the gift of knowledge from the Holy Spirit, lastly is the light of glory. All knowledge, whether it is philosophical or theological, is traveling in the direction that traverses the mind to God.

In his philosophizing, Bonaventure makes use of Aristotle's concepts of act and potentiality, form and matter, substance and accident. Though he accepts Aristotle's theory of hylomorphic composition of material things, he also follows Augustine and Ibn Gabirol who extends this composition to all creatures, including angels who have spiritual bodies. Bonaventure's teaching seems to integrate the Aristotelian theory of perception with the Augustinian doctrine of divine illumination. Looked at from one perspective, he seems somewhat as an eclectic who takes ideas from a variety of sources, combining them into a framework that seems to be a Christian theological mindset. It is arguable that the unifying factors in Bonaventure's eclecticism are not purely external to philosophy, even if the doctrines of Christian belief play a primary position. Bonaventure's arguments from the sense-perception of external objects to the existence of God presupposes in man a virtual or implicit awareness of God. In other words, the Augustinian line of thought for him is used as a fundamental principle. God is indeed reflected in nature acting as a shadow or "vestige" of God; however being manifested more clearly in the human soul, which is God's image.

The Errors of the Philosopher

Bonaventura pinpointed the errors of the philosophers. There were three main errors of the Aristoteleians: the belief in the eternity of the world, unity of the agent intellect for all men, and the denial of rewards and punishments after death. However, Bonaventure interprets Aristotle as having no idea of divine creation for Aristotle looks on the world as having existed from eternity. This idea that motion and time had no beginning is for Bonaventure an absurd concept and consideration. Aristotle was wrong when attempting to explain the sensible world while denying the divine Ideas as an intermediary between God and the world. Aristotle's error came as a threefold deficiency: he was ignorant of divine modeling, he did not understand divine providence, and he did not believe in divine governance of the world.

Likewise, other philosophers like Plato and Plotinus could achieve only a deformed and stunted truth because they lacked the help of faith. Their basic defect was the ignorance of original sin. When philosophy renounces its self-sufficiency and allows itself to be guided by faith, it becomes simply a stage toward higher knowledge. The correct order demands that faith should come before philosophy. All knowledge then whether philosophical of theological, is simply a step forward in the journey of the mind to God.

In Bonaventure's work titled *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, he catalogues the errors of philosophers: the philosophical doctrine on virtue is unsatisfactory (IV, 12); philosophical moral doctrine fails to the true end of man, which is supernatural, and they mistake the sufficiency of merit for acts done, and as a result, cannot cure the weakness of man (IV, 13). As such, philosophy has failed to do what it could and should do thus illustrating that it is radically inadequate in the matters of morality. His point is that if philosophers do not have divine grace and faith they are bound to make philosophical mistakes. While Bonaventure held that theology needs philosophy, he wanted also to maintain that philosophy has need of faith if it is to achieve its own end. To sum up, Philosophy is based on the principles of reason; theology is based on the principles of faith. Philosophy sees things based on inborn light whereas theology is based on an infused light, or better known as the gift of faith. The subject of theology is the credible whereas the subject of philosophy is what is naturally known. Philosophy begins with creatures and ends with God whereas theology begins with God and considers everything else in light of what God has revealed to mankind about himself.

The Relation of Philosophy and Theology

Bonaventure grants that philosophers can know with certitude some truths about God, however, their premises can only be based on rational arguments. Can philosophy stand alone without faith? First of all, theology without philosophy is not possible according to Bonaventure. Theology is the subject of faith and faith is presupposed by theology. Theology is concerned with the credible, with the believed, to a degree that it can take on understandability. In order for this to take place, philosophy is presupposed. The instruments associated with philosophy are useful for understanding truth and refuting error. Philosophy is concerned with things as they are in nature or in the soul according to knowledge that is naturally acquired. Theology, as a science, is founded on faith and revealed by the Holy Spirit those things

pertaining to grace and glory. Nonetheless, philosophy and theology are not separable pursuits. The theologian must employ philosophy having accepted what God has revealed, reflecting on these truths and bringing to bear on them the findings of the philosophers. The result is an organization of articles of faith according to a pattern not followed by Scripture itself. The theologian defends the truths of faith against his own doubt and it is philosophy that is an apt instrument for this task.

The Metaphysics of Bonaventure

Plato proposed the theory of exemplar or archetypal ideas. However, Aristotle rejected this theory. For Bonaventure, exemplarism is at the heart of metaphysics and is closely bound to the belief in divine creation. If a philosopher rejects exemplarism, he should not be accused if he conceives of God as only knowing himself and as one who does not exercise providence over creation. There were three main themes in Bonaventure's metaphysics: (1) Creation—the procession of creatures from God; (2) Exemplarism—God is the exemplar (pattern) of his creation; (3) Consummation—or the journey of man back to God by means of divine illumination. Of the three, the exemplars, or divine Ideas, are the most important because it is via the divine Ideas emanating from God where creatures return to God. The Ideas are the beginning of knowledge as well as of being. The nature of illumination is not another description for the general cooperation of God in the operation of creatures. Nor is illumination something as special as grace or something supernatural. It is God's cooperation with the activity of the creature as image bearers. A creature is an image insofar as it can know God, and thus illumination is the divine cooperation with the activity of this intellectual image bearer. God, as the exemplar cause, is the guarantee of the certitude and immutability of knowledge in the strictest sense. This is not to say that scientific knowledge requires explicit reference to the Ideas. The scientist achieves certain knowledge and implicitly, to some degree, is aware of the Ideas, allowing his knowledge to be certain.

His View of Creation

In man's ascent to the knowledge of God, the sensible world does have a role to play. Because the sensible world is composed of corporeal things and vestiges of God, man's experiences lead him to have an idea of the image of God, in whose image they are created. The whole purpose of the universe is to

lead men to the knowledge of God, even though its path is imperfect. Bonaventure insists that it is in this life one can know God. This is evident in or through something else, namely, creation, even though one cannot have direct and comprehensive knowledge of God. The universe is that through which we know God, beginning with the presence of the corporeal and the temporal. The doctrine of Aristotle that perhaps most agitated medieval Christian was that of the eternity of the world. Bonaventure argued from Scripture that, If the world is created from nothing, then it receives existence after non-existence; hence it cannot always have existed.

The created world depends for its existence on God's free will. It is according to the divine reason and power that creation takes place, albeit, not automatically or necessarily. God has eternally within himself the patterns of creatures, but he creates them freely and in time. Creatures come to be in time and from nothing owing themselves to the power and free will of God. This truth is assessable to human reason. However, man has only recognized this under the influence of Scripture.

Kalam Arguments for God

Following John Philoponus and some Arabian philosophers, Bonaventure offered arguments for the non-eternity of the world which is known as the *kalam* (from the Arabic word for eternal) for God. Since everything that begins has a cause, all Bonaventure needed to do was to show that the universe had a beginning, that it was not eternal. This he did in several ways.

First, he reasoned that if the world had no temporal beginning, an infinite time has already passed. Yet each day adds a unit to the temporal duration of the world. It is impossible to add to an infinite. Therefore, the eternity of the world supposes an infinity capable of being increased, which is absurd.

Second, if the world had no beginning, an infinite number of revolutions of the heavenly bodies must have already taken place. But this is clearly impossible, because an infinite series cannot be traversed. On the supposition of a world without a beginning in time, the present could not have been reached.

Third, if the world is eternal, men would always have existed, and there would be an infinite number of immortal souls. But it is impossible for an infinite number of things to exist simultaneously.

Thus, the doctrine of a temporal world agrees perfectly with human reason. The world is thus radically contingent upon God's will. Bonaventure calls the tendency of every creature to lapse into nothingness its "vertibility." This notion was opposed by St. Thomas, who while maintaining God's power to annihilate his creatures, taught the natural indestructibility of human soul, angels, the heavenly bodies, and the material universe as a whole.

Light is the Fundamental Stuff

He adopted the metaphysics of light taught at Oxford by Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, namely, that all bodies are composed of matter and the basic form of light. In itself the form of light is imperceptible. Visible light is not the form itself but simply a striking manifestation of it. Light in the created universe is a participation in God's light. Even knowledge, sensible and intellectual, takes place through light, or illumination. God is the pure inaccessible light (1 Tim. 6:16). The light of all the created universe is only a participation of the true Light, God. All corporeal things—bodies, plants, animals, mankind—stem from this basic energy of light. Knowledge, sensed things, and the intellect itself takes place through light (illumination).

Seminal Principles of All Things

Bonaventure adopts Augustine's doctrine of seminal principles to explain the origin of new beings in the universe. All beings with the exception of the human soul, which is created *ex nihilo* existed in matter in an embryonic or virtual state. This implies that no created agent can impart forms to matter; . . . all that creatures as secondary causes can do is bring forms existing in matter in an imperfect state to a perfect state. The human soul is created out of nothing as a composite of matter and form. Its life is a participation in the life of God. It changes and in so doing receives new qualities; so it has matter in its make-up. This is spiritual matter similar to that of the angels. Since the soul is made in the image of God, it bears within it the image of the Trinity. Thus three main faculties: understanding, will, and memory. There are in the soul three faculties consubstantial with the soul (just like the Trinity with one essence). The soul has a natural desire to be united with a human body even

though it is superior to and independent of the body. It is the soul that vivifies the body and gives life to it. This composition of the soul united to the body is what forms the complete and perfect man.

Bonaventure has an Aristotelian bent in regards to the existence of God. He also asserts the existence of God as a truth that is implanted in the human mind—meaning that man has an implicit awareness of God which can be made explicit by reflection upon God's effects. For example, every human being has a natural desire for happiness. This can only be attained through the possession of the supreme and ultimate good, which is God alone. Bonaventure dwells on the soul's orientation to God, making the implicit awareness of God explicit through consciousness of itself and of its basic desires. When he writes on spiritual and mystical matters, he naturally favors an interior approach to the knowledge of God, but when he speaks as a philosopher, he adopts an Aristotelian line of argument.

Exemplarism in God

Not only do all things come from God, but they are patterned after God (Exemplarism). God has created all things intelligently—that is to say, through divine Ideas – so they all mirror him to a greater or lesser extent. This likeness is at the very core of creatures, so without a knowledge of exemplarism it is impossible to penetrate deeply into the created world. Any philosophical world-vision which ignores such truths must be judged a defective account of reality. Bonaventure denies that Aristotle was a true metaphysician – because he attacked Plato's doctrine of Ideas and denied exemplarism he cannot claim the loftier title of metaphysician. Any theory of exemplarism which knows nothing of the Christian doctrine of Christ as the Divine Logos or Word will fall short of the complete truth. He maintains that the self-sufficient philosopher inevitably falls short. The human reason, even weakened by the Fall, can indeed attain philosophical knowledge. Moreover, the more he tries to know realities which transcend the field of sense-perception, the more he stumbles. For Bonaventure, Aristotle is a signal example of this faltering. He was a great natural philosopher, but when it was a question of God and of the world's relation to God, he tripped and fell into error on issues of vital importance. The Ideas through which God fashions his creatures are not really distinct from himself. Ideas are contained in the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. The Ideas are simply the infinite possible ways in which God's perfection can be imitated by creatures. It is typical of

the Seraphic Doctor to see traces of the Trinity everywhere in creation. Bonaventure says, "The created world is like a book in which the creative Trinity shines forth, is represented, and read. . . " So clearly does the universe reveal God to the purified mind that it is hardly necessary to formulate elaborate proofs for his existence. Our knowledge of the contingent already implies a knowledge of the necessary. All men possess an innate idea of God as a Being who is immutable and necessary. It is impossible to think that God does not exist (as in Anselm's second Ontological Argument).

Bonaventure, as well as Aquinas, saw philosophical understanding as demanding theological knowledge as its completion. However, he considered the knowledge about God as subordinated, from a theological point of view, to the ultimate immediate beatific vision of God.

Consummation: the Return to God

We come from God, are patterned after God, and will return to God.

Man was originally made upright because he was created in the image of God. However, it was through original sin, estranging man from His creator, that man must relearn how to again walk uprightly in order to recover his divine imageness. This can only be accomplished through faith and grace. Philosophy is a useful help on the way (back to God). In his masterpiece, *The Journey of the Mind to God* he outlines the main stages of man's return to God. First, we begin with the corporeal and temporal traces of God in the visible world outside us. Next we must enter into our mind, which is the spiritual image of God within us. Then, we must rise above ourselves to God. In short, man's journey to God must be "from the external to the internal and from the temporal to the eternal." This is patterned after the mysticism of Plotinus. Each stage of the journey is made possible by an illumination from God aiding the six powers of the soul: sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence, and the apex of the mind or spark of conscience.

Bonaventure's View of Knowledge

His epistemology is largely Augustinian, although Aristotle's influence is also present. There are two ways in which the soul can gain knowledge. With its "lower face" it can toward the sensible world acquire knowledge through sense perception. With its "higher face' it can also look inward upon

itself and discover there, independent of sense knowledge, a spiritual and intelligible. In sense knowledge a material object acts upon the man, who is a substantial composite of soul and body. Following upon sense knowledge, our intellect knows the natures of material things. This knowledge comes about by abstraction (as in Aristotle). We have both an agent and a possible intellect (against Averroes), but they are not separate faculties of the soul; they are simply different functions of one and the same intellect. Bonaventure would have agreed with Leibniz that there is nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the senses, with the exception of the intellect itself.

Sensible images are the data from which the intellect gets its knowledge. Abstraction is the work of the possible intellect carrying out the operation of retention, classification, and ordering of particular data. Each human soul contains an agent intellect in addition to the possible intellect. This agent intellect illuminates the possible intellect. These separate intellects act in the soul in order to assimilate what the intelligence gathers from the sensible world. When one goes beyond the sensible world to higher truths, it is then that it turns to the natural truth that is innate to man. Bonaventure is in a sense promoting the Augustinian syntheses of Aristotle and Plato—Aristotle knew how to speak the language of science but saw that human knowledge did not have the intelligible world of ideas as its object whereas Plato spoke the language of wisdom affirming the existence of the eternal Ideas. Here the synthesis is acted out in the illumination of the intellect by the Ideas of God. Basically, there is the presence of necessary truths in human thought as a result of the deliberate and immediate action of divine Ideas on man's intellect.

Certitude in Knowledge

In his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, Bonaventure divides knowledge into four kinds. First, knowledge may be purely speculative and founded on principles of reason. This is what he calls the science of human philosophy. Second, there is knowledge that resides in the intellect and is predisposed by desire. When its inclination is founded on the principles of faith then this knowledge is the science of Sacred Scripture. Third, there is knowledge residing in the intellect inclined towards the operation of things. This form is founded on natural law. Lastly, there is the kind of knowledge that is both inclined by faith and given to doing good works. This form is

founded on the principles of faith and finds its source in the gift of grace coming from God.

The idea of how the human intellect can attain absolute certain knowledge is answered by Bonaventure in this way. He says that man's knowledge has two characteristics: it is fallible and mutable. If man possesses any intellectual certitudes it is because the divine Ideas, which is infallible and immutable, has illumined the mind. In addition, the mind through the immediate contact with the divine Ideas not only sees *what is*, but it also sees *what should be*.

Two factors are required for certitude: Immutability on the part of the known object, and infallibility on the part of the knower. Whenever we know the truth, our mind is in contact with God who supplies the deficiencies of our nature. He illumines our mind, moving and regulating it by his divine Ideas so that it can know with certitude. This divine light is not the sole or total cause of our knowledge. Our faculties of sense and intellect must cooperate with it hence they are partial causes of knowledge. But they are not sufficient. We participate in the divine light through our agent intellect. The divine illumination is between a general and special help of God without being either. The certitude and objective ground of our knowledge is assured, not by our natural powers of knowing and the stability of the sensible world, but by the divine illumination and the mind's contact with the divine Ideas.

Bonaventure believed that all true knowledge of the intelligible is but a reflection, albeit, a dimly weakened lighted reflection of the eternal divine light only found in God who ultimately has dominion over man's knowledge. Man only sees truth because he is *in* the eternal reason not seeing truth *by* the eternal reason. If the intellect can attain these eternal truths and man can only reflect upon them confusedly, how is man to attain well-grounded knowledge while here on earth? Bonaventure answers this conundrum by saying that the knowledge available to man is not complete because its foundation is still lacking. In addition, man is, so to speak, located in between two extremes: God and earthly things. The soul points its superior part up towards God receiving absolute certitude and its inferior part down towards earthly things receiving relative certitude.

The soul knows itself and God without the help of the senses. However, there is one quality for which man cannot account for when it comes

to knowledge: certitude. There are two factors that are required for certitude: immutability (or fixity) on the part of the known object and infallibility (or perfect errorlessness) on the part of the knower. Certitude of knowledge can only be accounted for by God who himself is immutable and infallible. God illumines the mind influencing it by His divine Ideas so that the mind can know things with certitude.

Bonaventure's View of Ethics

Bonaventure did not believe that a person can do good without the help of God. He states that the will by itself is too weak to acquire virtue just like the intellect is too unstable to judge truth. Therefore, man needs moral illumination in order to be virtuous. Bonaventure's view of ethics is parallel to his solution to the problem of knowledge. Our will by itself is too weak and fluctuating to acquire virtue, just as the intellect by itself is too unstable to judge the truth. So we need a moral illumination to be established in virtue, just as we need an intellectual illumination to know the truth.

How does moral illumination function? In order to make moral judgments, one needs to be guided by the virtue of prudence. The virtue of prudence is central in the moral life. There are four cardinal virtues; Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. Prudence is thus the central virtue in the moral life. It guides us in all our moral acts by enabling us to apply the laws of our moral conscience to the particular acts we have to perform. Our intellect is unstable and contaminates the conclusions. Hence our soul must be illuminated by the divine virtues.

God has the four supreme cardinal virtues: Rectitude (justice), Stability of being (fortitude), Practical wisdom (prudence), and Purity (temperance). God strengthens the soul by leaving traces of them within it. Thus the good life of man requires constant contact with the divine virtues. Through these divine virtues, God strengthens the soul by leaving traces of these virtues within man. In order to achieve the good life man must be in contact with the divine virtues just like the knowledge of truth needs to be under the continual influence of the divine Ideas.

ALBERT THE GREAT (C. A.D. 1200 - 1280)



Introduction

The discovery of a new learning called scholasticism in the early part of the thirteenth century brought different reactions from Christians. Most criticized the new doctrines, some minimally utilized it in assimilating methods, and yet others were seeing the pagans in the arena of secular learning starting to outpace their Christian theology. This last group considered it their duty to catch up to these philosophers and put Christian thinking on an equal footing. In response, they realized that this type of learning had to be acquired prior to its use. Perhaps it was a good thing to have so much of it available to them. It seemed as though the acquisition of this secular learning would indeed help the spread of Christian truth. When they did not reject it they attempted to reconcile Avicenna's psychology and metaphysics with the traditional teachings of the Church Fathers, especially that of Augustine. Albert the Great saw that there was (1) a distinct difference between theology and philosophy and (2) faith was a mode of perception, learning and reasoning different than natural reason. Instead of Albert dismissing the study of philosophy he concluded that the first task was to achieve a complete mastery of philosophical and scientific learning under all its forms. This refocusing towards the philosophical world marks the turning point in the history of Western thought. By in large, Albert believed that a synthesis of new learning, derived from Greek and Islamic sources, with Christianity was possible and intellectually necessary.

His Background

In addition to being the teacher of the great Thomas Aquinas, Albert was great in his own right. The Middle Ages gave St. Albert the titles "Albert the Great" and the "Universal Teacher." Albert was considered a scholar in the full sense of the word, especially in the area of his theological work. He was born in Lauingen, Germany. His date of birth is customarily 1206/1207. This is about the same time that Universities began in France, Germany, and England. He was trained in Cologne and later taught there and in Paris. Albert was canonized and made a Doctor of the Church in 1931. He was called "Albert the great" because of his encyclopedic knowledge and excellence in teaching. Albert the Great died in Colongne in 1280, only six years after his most famous pupil, Thomas Aquinas, died in 1274.

Albert began his university studies at Bologna and Padua but was there only for a short period of time. In 1223, he joined the Dominican Order and was later sent to the convent at Cologne to pursue his studies, however only as a novice. From 1228 to 1240, he taught theology at various Dominican convents in Germany. In 1240, he was sent to the university of Paris. Two years later, he occupied one of the two available chairs. He held this position from 1242 to 1248. He was sent to Cologne to create the Dominican *Studium generale*. From 1254 to 1257 Albert was the Dominican provinicial of Germany after which he returned to Cologne to teach for three years. He later became bishop of Ratisbon in 1260. He kept this position for the following two years. Albert spent the last eighteen years of his life as a teacher, preacher, researcher, and writer.

His Writings

Albert's writings include his *Opera Omnia* (ed. A. Borgnet thirty-eight volumes). He wrote a *Commentary on the Sentences,* and *c*ommentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics.* He also wrote *On the Unity of the Intellect Against Averroes* and his own *Summa Theologiae* and a book *On the Resurrection.* Albert also produced an untranslated book *On the Good* which discusses *Synderesis,* the natural capacity or disposition (*habitus*) of the practical reason to apprehend intuitively the universal first principles of human action.

Though he wrote many biblical commentaries, Albert is best known for several other works. These can be divided into three periods, the first being from 1240 to 1248. First, there was the *Tractatus de natura boni* (*Treatise on*

the Good) followed by the *Summa de creaturis* (*Summa on Creatures*). This work contained five parts: On the Four Coevals, On Man, On Good and the Virtues, On the Sacraments, and On the Resurrection. His last commentary was on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.

During the second period (1248—1254), Albert wrote commentaries on the entire corpus of Pseudo-Dionysius and on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Between the years 1254 to 1270, Albert paraphrased Boethius's works as well as a number of Aristotle's works setting forth the tenets of their philosophies. He draws upon the interpretations of Al-Ghazzali and Avicenna. One of the works of Albert is titled *Liber de causis*. In his exposition of Aristotle's Metaphysics, Albert discusses the relationship between philosophy and theology. This time period is known as his philosophical period.

The fourth period (1270—1280) is where Albert writes his *Summa theologia*. This work was composed after that of Aquinas's but was not completed.

Faith and Philosophy

Albert welcomed every advance of human reason in every field. He had strong words for those who denied the value of philosophy. He made a clear distinction between philosophy and theology. In his work titled *Summa theologia*, he sets out to ask the question, Is theology a science? If it is a science, then what kind is it, what is its subject matter, etc. He provides the following definition: Theology is a science that considers whatever pertains to generating, nourishing, and strengthening faith. Sighting Titus 1:1, he also says that theology is concerned with what is knowable only as it is an inclination towards piety. Piety is defined by Albert as the cult of God which is perfected by faith, hope, love, prayers, and sacrifices. Theology is the knowledge of those things that pertain to salvation—the unifying of theology. But he limited the scope of human reason from his predecessors. He advanced the physical sciences by use of observations. However, Albert lacked the synthetic and creative ability of Aquinas. He primarily used their philosophy rather than change it and therefore it is easy to see that his own philosophy is an encyclopedia of blending and a continuous doctrinal exposition of Aristotle, Avicenna, Alfarabi, Gabirol, Augustine, and Denis. He was more

encyclopedic and syncretistic in his views. This resulted in a less coherent synthesis of Aristotle and Neo-Platonism.

The subject of theology is God who is the subject of metaphysics in the sense that the knowledge of God is what is principally sought after in the science of theology. In this science, the properties and causes are sought after. Not only does the subject of theology seek after the properties and causes of God, it is also describing the work of reparation. This field of study is not just the acquisition of knowledge but rather of salvation for the soul.

The Nature of Human Beings and Knowledge

Albert made a casual but unsatisfying union of Aristotle and Plato on the relation of soul and body. Aristotle defined the soul as the form and perfection of and external to the body; Plato defined it as a spiritual substance separate from the body but moving the human body. He said, "Considering the soul in itself, we agree with Plato; considering it as the form animating the body, we agree with Aristotle." However, this did not do justice to Aristotle's notion of the soul as the form of the body. Nor did it account for the unity of soul/body.

Platonic Dualism of Soul and Body Man is a composite being who is the last born of creation. He is a composite being made up of soul, body, and the union of both. Souls are not created by separate Intelligences but are created directly and immediately by God. The soul is one uniting its powers of essence in unity.

He ended with a Platonic dualism of two distinct substances (illustrated as a sailor to a ship). He concluded that man's happiness is incomplete without a body (hence, he stressed the need for the resurrection of the body). Contrary to Averroes pantheism (of one Agent Intellect for all human beings), Albert held that each human being has his own agent intellect. Not wanting to be considered a dualist, Albert backs away from this notion and insists that the soul is the substantial form of the body. The soul plays an important role. It animates the body fulfilling its natural aptitude of providing life to the body. Albert did consider the soul as an incorporeal being complete in itself and independent of matter. This points to Albert's conclusion: the soul is basically an intellect, entirely spiritual, free of matter and form.

Notwithstanding, the soul is a special creation of God unable to be produced by natural effects.

Albert states that the agent intellect is *in* the soul; so too is the possible intellect. This agent intellect is not a habit (i.e., not a permanent possession of certain intelligible knowledge) nor is it a separate Intelligence injecting intelligible forms into the possible intellect. Rather, the agent intellect proceeds from the soul inasmuch as the soul is act: it flows from its *quo est* (its essence or nature of the individual). The possible intellect flows from the soul inasmuch as the soul is potency: it flows from its *quod est* (that which is, namely, the individual being). Thus, the agent intellect draws the possible intellect from potency to act.

Abstraction from Sensation

Albert posits that the soul has two intellectual powers: the passive or perceptive part enabling it to receive knowledge and the agent part by which it actively acquires knowledge. The agent intellect has participation in God's own intellect providing light for understanding. This agent intellect is the image of God in the soul. The possible (passive) intellect abstracts knowledge from sense data.

Human knowledge by abstraction from sense data is only a lower form of knowledge preparing the way for a higher divine illumination. Immersed as they are in matter, God enables our minds by successive illumination to culminate in the Vision of God (the Beatific Vision). Thus, there is a continuity of knowledge from sense perception, through abstraction and divine illumination (in this life) to the ultimate goal of mystical union with God.

Divine Illumination

Divine illumination in this life goes beyond sense knowledge of physical and mathematical object to metaphysical or "divine" objects that can't be attained by abstraction. Albert calls this "divine help" grace where the agent intellect receives illumination from above in order for the possible intellect to abstract forms from the corporeal world. Innately, the possible intellect is somewhat darkened and cannot receive full illumination from the agent intellect, but only gradually. The ultimate goal for man is to possess an agent intellect perfected with divine things in order to rise to a spiritual nature

of the angels and God. Angels have this illumination instantaneously, while humans get it only progressively. Albert's true successor was not Aquinas but the Neo-Platonic German mystic, Master Eckhart (see).

His Metaphysical Views

Albert distinguishes the difference between metaphysics and theology. In metaphysics, God is known as First Being; theology knows God through faith. Since there is a difference in the mode of access, Albert considers theology as more certain than metaphysics. This makes theology the most certain science because it is based on what is first, immutable, and eternal. God can be known in many ways: positively—knowing that he is, what he is, and so on, and privately (negatively)—knowing what he is not, how he is not, and so on. When God is known as a "substance" (not measured of course by corporeal means of place and time, this notion of a divine substance is achieved by negating the characteristics relating to finite substances attempting to understand the invisible infinite. (The kind of natural knowledge Albert is referring to is the one indicated by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:20.) Thus in this life, all of the knowledge of God is through the knowledge of something else, or through some mean, natural or by grace.

Unlike metaphysics, theology does not deal with being insofar as it is being, but rather with the Being who is the ultimate end of man and with what man must know in order to reach this end. Therefore, theology is a separate science. In theology, the subject is the supremely enjoyable, known in the light of revelation. Philosophical matters are interpreted in relation to the ultimate enjoyable reality. There is only one being whose whole is identical with its form, or *esse*: God. All other beings only are by accident, or put another way, their *esse* is accidental to their being. To Albert, created beings require a cause for their existence. This is why God is the only being who cannot be conceived as non-existing.

Albert's views on "Being" were syncretistic. Following the Early Fathers (against Aristotle), Albert saw God as the Primary Being whose first effect was being (as Dionysius said in his *Book on Causes*). Unlike the Neo-Platonist, God is an intelligent Being who freely created the world. However, while being is the most fundamental of God's effects, it is not the most perfect —Mind is. It is more perfect to understand than to live, and it is most perfect to live and to understand. God gives His creatures being, goodness, truth, and

beauty. In the ultimate sense, goodness is prior to our being since "We exist because God is good, and we are good insofar as we exist." God alone is absolutely simple. This is why His proper name is "He Who Is" (Ex. 3:14). Thus, being is understood in terms of unity (a Neo-Platonic view).

The Four Coevals

According to the classical commentaries on Scripture, God first created four coevals: matter, time, empyrean heaven, and angelic nature (*Summa on Creatures*). Matter is first because it is the subject of the forms of all the beings to be generated. Prime matter is the first "principle" or origin of all things. According to the theologian, matter is that which the Creator turned into distinct beings through the six-day work of creation. Albert considers matter as one. However to the philosopher, matter is the subject of change. Accordingly, these different sorts of change require different sorts of matter.

Time, the second coeval, is for any given corruptible being, the measure of its duration and differs according to the nature of its being. Since God is an immutable being, his measure is eternity, or a perpetually present now, of a limitless duration proper to the uncreated *esse* of God. Mutable beings however, which are not eternal, live in an everlasting life of time.

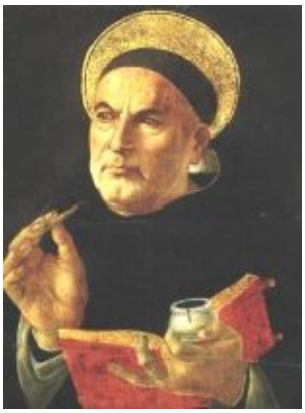
The third coeval is the empyrean (or skyward) heaven composed of form and matter (however, its nature is not apprehended) and is only known by its potency with respect to place. This is the abode of angels and its nature is of light. There is also the aqueous heavens similar to what is called water. It is here where God created on the second day when he divided the firmaments (Gen. 1:6). The next heaven is the firmament containing stars. Above these "material" heavens is the heavenly domain of the Trinity: immaterial in nature, identical with God Himself. Each of the nine moving spheres has three movers: First, God, the Prime Mover of the world; second, Intelligences, pure and having wills participating in the divine perfection of the Prime Mover; third, a material form(s) keeping the sphere moving in a circular pattern.

The fourth coeval being is that of the angelic nature, though they do not have composition of form and matter. These are subsisting Intelligences endowed with innate knowledge of intelligible realities, having the ability to reason. They are endowed with free will. Their idea of God is not the same as man's because they are not directly associated with the material world.

Conclusion

Albert outlived his favorite pupil, Thomas Aquinas, but he did not outthink him. Albert traveled from Cologne to Paris in 1277 to defend Aquinas against condemnation for some of his Aristotelian views. However, Albert never became a Thomist. Rather, he remained more Neoplatonic than Aristotelian. The more natural successor of Albert's views was Master Eckhart (see below). Nonetheless, had it not been for the encyclopedic knowledge of Albert the Great and his teaching skills there would not have been a Thomas Aquinas as we know him.

THOMAS AQUINAS (C. A.D. 1224/1225 - 1274)



The life of Aquinas

Aquinas is called "the Angelic Doctor" because of his highly developed view of Angels. His father was a political activist from Aquino, Italy. Thomas was born in Roccasecca, Italy (c. A.D. 1224 or 1225). He entered Benedictine Monastery at Monte Cassino at age five. He studied the arts there. His family actually came and captured him from the Benedictine monastery and took him home. In the secular University at Naples (1239—1244), he studied Avicenna and Averroes and the pantheistic interpretations of Aristotle via Plotinus, and Neo-Platonists. This philosophy had infiltrated the Muslim's commentaries on Aristotle (on which even Christian thinkers were dependent). William Moerbeke was making fresh translations of Aristotle's works from Greek into Latin (not dependent on the Arabic pantheistic distortions).

He joined the Dominican O. P. (Order of Preachers), where he preached the Bible exegetically every day. He studied with/under Albert the Great (1245—1248) who was one of the greatest scholars and teachers of the day. Aquinas was quiet as a student and was dubbed the "dumb ox" by his fellow students. Albert said, "We call him the dumb ox, but I tell you the whole world will hear his roar."

Aquinas later taught at the university of Paris (1252—1259). At this time the "secular" (versus "sacred") referred to priests that didn't belong to a religious order. He went to Paris, studied as a student of theology until 1257. From 1252—1253, he was a bachelor of Scripture and from 1255—1256, he

was a bachelor of the *Sentences* in the Dominican convent in Paris. At the end of this period he was admitted as Master of theology and was granted a license to teach on the faculty of theology of the University of Paris. His inaugural lecture was delivered in the summer of 1256. His "inaugural lecture " at the university was boycotted by the "seculars." He taught the Bible and The *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. He was very objective and emotionally detached in his writings. He referred to Aristotle as "The Philosopher" and Averroes as "The Commentator." Averroes was a highly rationalistic pantheist (while Plotinus was a mystical pantheist). Aquinas is credited with stopping the flow of pantheism by using apologetics successfully. The years of study at Paris were far from serene because it was at this time that the efforts of the clergy to keep the religious from faculty positions reached a peak of what can be called a frenzy. Thomas and Bonaventure were granted their degrees at the same time, but the admission to chairs on the faculty of theology was delayed.

From 1256 to 1259, Thomas held one of the chairs of theology at the University of Paris where during this time he wrote *Commentary on the Sentences* (and also completed his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*). Also during this time he wrote his commentaries on: The Gospel according to Matthew, the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, the *De trinitate, De hebdomadibus* of Boethius, the opuscula *On Being and Essence, Principles of Nature*, and several quodlibertal questions.

He taught in Italy at the Papal Schools in Italy (1259—1268). From 1260 to 1268, Thomas taught first at Orvieto and then from 1265 to 1267, he taught in Rome at the convent of St. Sabine and then perhaps at Viterbo. From 1269 to 1272, he reclaimed his chair on the faculty of theology at the University of Paris. This could be called perhaps the Aristotelian period of Thomas' career since during this time he completed his commentaries on the *Metaphysics, On the Soul* and commented as well on the *Physics, Nicomachean Ethics, Meteorology, On Interpretations,* and *Posterior Analytics*. At the same time he commented on the *Liber de causis.* He also commented on Job, John's Gospel, and the Epistles of St. Paul. He continued working on the *Summa Theologica* and engaged in many *Disputed Questions*, those *On the Soul, On Evil, On the Virtues, On the Union of the Word*, as well as in many quod-liberal questions. He returned to Paris to teach (1268—1272). Then he went back to Italy (1272—1274). It is possible that the Dominicans were bribed to get him out of France. Before he died some say he had a mystical experience and said his works seemed like "straw" by comparison.

He was alleged to have done many miracles, but they are apocryphal (being based on second hand witnesses). He was perhaps the greatest systematic theologian of all time. No one has produced anything that compares to *The Suma Theologica* (sixty volume set). He was a great Bible expositor of the Latin text (though he did not know Greek or Hebrew). He held to a historical, grammatical, and literal hermeneutic.

Thomas taught at the University of Naples, where he was sent in 1272 to found a Dominican House of Studies. Besides organizing the curriculum and teaching, he wrote more commentaries on Aristotle, those *On the Heavens, On Generation and Corruption,* and *Politics*. Moreover, he worked on part three of the *Summa Theologiae.* In 1274, on orders of the Pope, he was sent out for the ecumenical council to be held at Lyons. He never made it. Falling ill on the way, he died yet not quite fifty years of age on March 7, 1274.

He rejected the Immaculate Conception and did not hold to the "the infallibility of the Pope" (1870), nor did he hold to "veneration of Mary" and other uniquely Catholic doctrines. In many respects Aquinas was a moderate "Calvinistic" and "Protestant." He believed in the Bible alone, grace alone, faith lone, and Christ alone, and all for the glory of God alone.

He believed in two kinds of Revelation: General revelation (Natural Law) – nature proves that there is one God and the immortality of the soul, and a natural moral law. Special revelation is binding on believers (Divine law). It reveals that the Trinity is supernatural and one of the "mysteries" of the faith. There is no salvation apart from the Gospel. The Bible is inspired and inerrant, but neither the church fathers nor the creeds are inspired. He recognized that there are "mysteries" like the Trinity, and Incarnation that go *beyond* reason, but that do not *contradict* reason. He incorporated Aristotelianism (which was the dominant philosophy of his day) in his thinking and writing (as Augustine did Platonism). Aquinas died March 7, 1274 at the Fossannova Monastery on the way to the Council of Lyons in France and is buried in Toulouse, France. He was "canonized" (made a saint by Roman Catholic Church) in 1376.

The Writings of Aquinas

His writings can be divided into several periods of his life. The first group were during his first teaching assignment in Paris. While teaching at Paris the first time (1252—1259):

Scripta super libros Sententiarum (Commentary on the *Sentences*).

De principiis Naturae (*On the Principles of Nature*), 1256.

De Ente et Essentia (*On Being and Essence*),1256. This is possibly his most important work.

De Veritate (*On Truth*), 1256—1259.

De Trinitate (*On the Trinity*), 1259.

Summa contra Gentiles (may have begun 1259).

Compendium Theologiae (either here or very late).

Contra Impugnantes Dei Cultum et Religionem (*Against Those Who Impugn the Worship and Religion of God*), before 1256.

While teaching in Italy the first time (1259—1268):

De Potentia (*On the Power of God*), 1259—1268.

Summa contra Gentiles, 1259—1263. This is one of the greatest apologetic books ever written. Aquinas wrote this for the missionaries in Spain who were

dealing with the Muslims, and he is credited with saving Christianity against the arguments of Islam.

Summa Theologiae I, II, 1265—1271.

Catena Aurea (*"Golden Chain" on the Gospels*), after 1263.

While in Paris the second time (1269—1272).

De Spiritualibus Creaturis (*On Spiritual Creatures*), 1266/1267.

Posteriorum Analyticorum Expositio (*Commentary on Posterior Analytics*), 1268ff.

De Anima (*On the Soul*), 1268—1270.

In Duodecim Libros Metaphysics Expositio (*Commentary on XII Book of Metaphysics*), 1268—1271.

De Unitate Intellectus (*On Unity of the Intellect*), 1269.

Poleticorum Expositio (*Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle*),1265—1271.

Meteorologicorum Expositio (*Commentary on Meteors*), 1269—1272.

In Decem Libros Ethicorum Expositio (*Commentary on X Book of Ethics*),. 1271—1272.

Perigermeneias (*On Interpretation*),1269—1272.

De Malo (*On Evil*), 1269—1272.

De Virtutibus (*On Virtues*), 1269—1272.

While in Italy the Second Time (1272—1274):

Summa Theologiae III, 1272—1273.

De Caelo et Mundo (*On Heaven and the Earth*), 1272—1273.

De Regno (*On Kingship*), 1272—1274 (?) or earlier. This is a book supports the right of revolution over against an unjust government. This belief was adopted by John Calvin and passed on to early American thought as expressed in the *Declaration of Independence*.

Aquinas authored some ninety works, many of which are multi-volume sets, most of which are translated into English (see Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 381-430). Since many are multi-volume sets, this is probably the equivalent of about 150 books in 19 years (between ages 30-49) before he died at age 49. Some autographs of Aquinas' works remain. The Dominicans were very poor and they used the equivalent of old paper bags to write on to save money. Aquinas would write around holes and have inserts, "see here" to direct the reader to his continued thought. There are also errors; he mistakes the word "evil" and "good" in one work.

Thomas' View on Philosophy and Theology

Philosophy aims at knowledge prompted by evidence of what the mind can attend to. The starting point are self-evident truths. Theology is the science of the Sacred Scripture, a discourse bearing on the truths revealed by God in Scripture. Revealed truths are the principles of theology. Theology

accepts its principles on faith whereas philosophy accepts its principles on their evidence. The theologian, according to Thomas, tries to bring together what is believed (by faith in revelation) and what is known (through natural evidence used by the philosopher). Thomas asks the question if it is legitimate for theology to employ philosophical reasoning. Having considered this, he shows that St. Paul himself used philosophical doctrines in his epistles, he cites the Fathers, and so on.

Theological speculation presupposes faith in revelation and at least one of the premises is accepted by faith. The philosopher does not account for this in his reasoning. With the theologian supposing that the free will of God is to save mankind as a whole, it is necessary that the knowledge of salvation should be revealed to all men. Saving truth would have to be revealed otherwise men would have remained in ignorance. Theology must deal with some philosophically knowable truths in reference to salvation, truths such as, God exists, God is one, God is incorporeal, etc. Since these truths have been revealed to men, the expanse of this revelation—natural and supernatural—extends to the whole body of human natural knowledge. Therefore the unity of theology first includes what God has actually revealed. This includes what the material world by logic—the science of nature and metaphysics—and what the theologian deduces from revealed truth. Thus, theology builds itself a philosophical body of knowledge which it requires in order to promote salvation offered by God's revealed word. It is in fact that philosophical speculation did find itself in the eyes of the medieval theologians. This integration with theology was favorable to the progress (and purification) of philosophy.

Thomas distinguishes three ways in which philosophy can be used in theology. First, as a preamble to faith proving by natural reason that God exists, he is one. Second, to make known what is believed by appealing to philosophical teachings. Third, the theologian can use philosophical arguments against the attacks thus showing these acquisitions to be false or inconclusive. However, the theologian could use philosophy as a detriment to faith, such as employing philosophical teachings that may be contrary to faith thereby corrupting natural reasoning. (Thomas thought Origen was guilty of this.) Second, the theologian could submit revealed truth to natural reason as an absolute measure. For example, believing only what can be proven by philosophical means.

In regards to the theology of the philosophers, Thomas thinks that it was necessary that man be instructed by divine revelation even concerning those things which human reason can know about God. The truth about God discovered by reason alone can potentially be mixed with error. Thus, divine revelation was required in order for man to understand salvation.

Thomas Aquinas had intensions to make theology more discoverable than Albert the Great had already done. This method would perhaps require a reformation and reinterpretation to current philosophical principles. Thomas freely reinterpreted what he thought was necessary and replaced it with a truer philosophy. His reason was as such: philosophy is not required for salvation, nor does theology need to resort to philosophy, but if theology does use philosophy it needs to be true philosophy. As a result of Thomas doing so, his reformation of theology meant a reformation of philosophy.

The Epistemology of Aquinas

Aquinas was Aristotelian in his epistemology. It is expressed in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima; Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics; Commentary on Aristotle's On Interpretation; Summa Theologica I, 16; 58; 77-79; 87 etc; On Truth 8, 14; 10, 8, etc*. He outlined first the Powers of sensation (power is the accident of the property of man, not his essence).

According to Thomas, each man has his own agent intellect and his own knowledge. The agent intellect is the intellectual light created by God in man's soul as a participated likeness of the uncreated Light. Thomas agreed with Aristotle: the nature of our created light of knowing as the agent intellect.) Man's intellect does not participate fully in this divine light. When man comes into existence, his intellect is like a blank slate on which nothing is written. However, it contains the power to know even though it is devoid of objects of knowledge. The senses have as objects phantasms (likenesses) in the 'intellectual' senses. The agent intellect abstracts the intelligible nature of the phantasms by withdrawing the universal from the particular. The possible intellect then receives the universal from all things and enables apprehension from the sensible things in order to form concepts. As a result, it can make judgments about what was apprehended.

The Powers of the Sensation

First, human beings senses such as, the powers to Receive image from a single object from the five Single Senses (Outer Senses) which include (a) Sight—color is proper object; (2) Smell—odor is proper object; (3) Touch—tactile is proper object; (4) Hearing—sound is proper object; (5) Taste—flavor is proper object, and (6) Common (unifying) inner sense—the ability to recognize objects and coordinate them. This includes movement, rest, number, shape, size (Inner Senses).

Second, humans also have the power to Retain these image-Imagination. Third, there is the power to Recall these images—memory. Fourth, there is the power to Relate these to ends—cogitative and estimative (instinct fits in here).

The Powers of Intellection

Knowledge begins in the senses. There is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses, except the mind itself. But we are born a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) with no innate ideas (as Platonists held). The mind has the power of abstraction from sensations.

First, there is the power of the mind to Represent the object sensed without its material condition. Then there is the power of Abstraction of the impressed form on the mind via the sense. This is called apprehension of the first act of the intellect.

Second, the mind has the power to Relate images to each other and to the external judgment which affirms or denies. This is the Expressed form (species) and is called the second act of the intellect.

Third, there is the power of mind to Reason from one proposition to another. This is logic and is the third act of the intellect). The objects of Intellection are: (1) Material object which is Being; (2) Proper object which are sensible beings, material composites (3) Formal objects which is intelligible being (*ratio entis*).

The Nature of Knowledge

Knowing is neither making nor receiving but existing; it is neither action nor passion but an operation of being or becoming. To know is to become the other or to become the object known (in an intentional way) (to know the chair I take on the form of the chair in my mind ideologically). The beginning point of knowledge is what we know was first in the senses before it is in the mind. There is, however, an *a priori*, innate, natural capacity to know. Knowing something for certain requires first principles which we are inclined by our rational natures to know naturally.

Thomas' doctrine of knowledge is harmonious with his doctrine of truth. Truth is the conformity of intellect and thing brought about by the assimilation of the intellect to its object taking place in two phases. First, the intellect is informed by the essence of things making these things its own. Second, this assimilation is more perfectly done by judgment. The intellect can be said to be true when it judges *that what is, is*, and *what is not, is not*. Truth is a property of judgment founded upon existence (*esse*) of things rather than upon the essence of things. This truth is concerned with speculative judgments about existing things. Practical judgments are made concerning acts to be done or things to be made (through an action).

Aquinas and Bonaventure: Two Approaches to God

By contrast to his colleague, Aquinas had a distinctive approach to God. It can be summarized by the following chart. Each word indicates the stress of emphasis. The two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive in all respects:

TWO APPROACHES TO GOD

	AQUINAS	BONAVENTURE
INFLUENCE	ARISTOTLE	PLATO
APPROACH	RATIONAL	MYSTICAL
ACT OF	KNOWING	LOVING

FACULTY	MIND	HEART
GOAL	UNION WITH GOD	VISION OF GOD
ARGUMENT FOR GOD	COSMOLOGICAL (VERTICAL)	KALAM (HORIZONTAL)
GOD	SUSTAINING CAUSE	ORIGINATING CAUSE

First Principles of Knowledge for Aquinas

Aquinas was a foundationalist, holding that all knowledge is based on first principles (otherwise there would be no basis for knowing). But he was a reductive foundationalist (affirming that all knowledge rests on first principle). He was not a deductive foundationalist (like Spinoza) who believed all truth could be deduced from first principles the way Euclid deduced his geometry form his basic axioms.

All first principles are self-evident (true in themselves without reference to anything else). The predicate can be reduced to the subject (but the predicate cannot necessarily be deduced from the subject, as in deductive foundationalism). For example, every effect has a cause (reductively), but every cause does not necessarily have an effect (It may not be causing anything).

There are five basic first principles of knowledge. They are undeniable, and all rational thought is based on them. They cannot be denied without affirming them in the very denial. These are: (1) Principle of non-contradiction (B is not non-B); (2) Principle of identity (B is B); (3) Principle of excluded middle (either B or non-B); (4) Principle of causality (non-B can't cause B); (5) Principle of finality (Being acts for and end (B)).

Faith and Reason in Aquinas

Contrary to Francis Schaeffer, Thomas did not give rise to modern humanism. He never separated faith and reason. Nor did he exalt reason to some isolated status beyond faith. He did believe reason can be used to prove that God exists and to disprove atheism, and agnosticism. Reason is never the

basis of faith; Divine authority is the basis of faith. One must believe in God because He is God. But reason can be used in support of faith. Apologetics has a pre-evangelism role to prove the existence of God, and a post-conversion use to support faith. But it is never the ground for believing in God.

There is no reasoning *to* faith, or *for* faith before believing in God. "Belief that" is prior to "belief in." Evidence is prior to "faith in" God. Human reason can lead to "believe that" but not to "belief in" God. "Belief in" is not based on evidence. It is a matter of the will. Only the Holy Spirit can persuade us to believe "in" God. Reason and evidence can prove *that* God exist, but they do not in themselves persuade someone to believe *in* God. Apologetics can lead a horse to water, but only the Holy Spirit can persuade him to drink.

Aquinas saw that faith was an indispensable assistant to Christian philosophy. Though Thomas was influenced by Aristotle, Thomas also learned from the Greeks and Arabs. But the resulting synthesis was a uniquely Christian one. He learned about the nature of philosophy and of rational demonstration, understanding that their concepts had inherent limitations, especially in regards to God. Thomas recognizes that philosophy begins with data furnished by the senses and analyzed by good reason, based in undeniable first principles of knowledge. The Christian philosopher has the unique advantage of guidance from divine revelation. However, the premises of the Christian's philosophy must stand on their own apart from divine revelation.

The Metaphysics of Aquinas

The subject of Metaphysics is the study of being as being. It inquires into what pertains to being as it is being. This study Thomas calls wisdom. Thomas states in his *Metaphysics* that "[i]f there were no substance other than those which exist in nature with which physics is concerned, physics would be the first science. But if there is an immobile substance, this kind will be prior to natural substance, and the philosophy considering it will be First Philosophy. And because it is first, it will be universal and it will fall to it to consider being as being. . . . The science of first being [presumably God] and of common being is the same [but not synonymous]. [Therefore,] First Philosophy is universally common to all things" (In VI *Metaphysics*, lecture 1, n. 1170, 1169).

Metaphysics is the science that is the foundation for all other sciences. This particular science would focus its concerns on the most intelligible "objects." These can be understood in three ways. First, the grounding of understanding is what is meant to be intelligible. The science that deals with the primary causes (albeit, first causes) is said to deal with the most intelligible things. All other sciences deal with effects and are said to be lesser intelligible. Second, the science dealing with the intelligible that comprehends through sense perception thereby recognizing the most universal principles of all things, such as, the one and the many, and potency and act. However, these abstract notions do not fall under any particular science. Third, the most intelligible things are those things that are free from existent matter, like God and the angels. The subject of this particular science is being in general, separate from matter both in conception and in existence. There are three names that can be given to this kind of science: Theology because it is concerned with immaterial things, the chief of which is God; Metaphysics because it comes after physics and studies being as being; First Philosophy because it is concerned with primary realities or first causes.

Aquinas thought that order was necessary in every field of thought. The order that reason produces in its own ideas is *logic*. The order reason produces through acts of the will is *ethics*. The order reason produces in external things is *art*. The order that reason contemplates, but does not produce, is *nature*. Metaphysics is the study of reality in-so-far as it is real. It is the study of being as being. Only God is pure Being, pure Actuality. God alone *is* Being; everything else *has* being.

The Nature of Creation

God does not have any accidents (that which inheres in a substance but is not part of it). Hence, God can not have any temporal change. He is not in time; rather, he created time (i.e., a temporal world in which we can measure time). God created *ex nihilio*. Causality is simultaneous in creation. Aquinas opposed to the Kalam argument for God. He maintained that reason tells us that eternal creation is theoretically possible (because a cause can be causing eternally), but revelation informs us that it is actually temporal. God created from eternity; but not in time for He created time. God was ontologically prior to creation. But nothing was chronologically prior to creation. That is a category mistake, claiming there was time before there was time. The universe is dependent on God for its existence, He is the sustaining Cause right now.

The horizontal Kalam argument demonstrates the originating Cause, and the vertical cosmological argument demonstrates the conserving Cause.

The Nature of Human Beings

Human beings are a "hylomorphic" (form/matter) unity. There are two kinds of actual being: substantial (to be a man) and accidental (to be a black man). According to Thomas, ". . . that which is in potency to substantial being is called prime matter, but that which is potency to accidental being is called the subject, for the subject gives being or existence to the accident, since the accident has no being save in its subject; hence, it is said that accident are in a subject, but substantial form is not said to be in the subject. Matter differs from the subject in this: that the subject is not something which exists because something advances to it; rather it is autonomous (*per se*) and has complete being; for example, a man does not come to be (a man) thanks to whiteness. Matter, on the other hand, has being from that which advenes to it, since of itself it is incomplete, indeed has no being. . . . Hence, absolutely speaking, form gives being to matter, but the accident does not give being to the subject, but the subject to the accident" (*De princ. nat.,* chap. 1).

There are three basic views of human beings: (1) Anthropological Monism – body and soul one (e.g., Materialism) so that one cannot exist without the other; (2) Anthropological Dualism or Platonic Dualism. In this view body and soul are separate substances. Man is a soul and merely has a body in which the soul dwells, (3) Hylomorphism (Aquinas' position following Aristotle)—man is a unity of mind and matter (soul and body).

The anthropological monism view of the soul and body is that they are identical. Therefore when one dies either annihilation occurs or else God must create another body for the resurrection. Aquinas says the human soul is the formal cause of a human and is created in the womb. Augustine and other traducians affirm that the soul was originally created in Adam but is passed on by natural generation. All living things (since Adam) get their life from their parents.

Aquinas' Answer to Parmenides' Ontological Monism

Parmenides argued that there can only be one Being in the universe because if there were two they would have to differ by either being or non-

being. But they can't differ by non-being because non-being is nothing, and to differ by nothing is not to differ at all. Neither, said Parmenides, can they differ by being since being is the very respect in which they are identical. And they cannot differ by the way they are identical.

Aquinas argued that this begs the question by claiming that all "being" is identical (univocal) wherever it is found. But this is a circular argument, insisting that all being is the same since all being is the same. For Aquinas, there are different kinds of being, some are finite and one is infinite Being. In short, being is used analogously for Aquinas so that God is an infininte kind of being and John is a finite kind of being. Parmenides wrongly assumes being is univocal (entirely the same wherever it is found). But for Aquinas finite being is analogous (i.e., similar) to infinite Being because finite being is composed of existence (act) and essence (potency). But infinite Being is uncomposed; it is being pure and simple.

So, God is pure Actuality. Angels are completely actualized potentialities (no change in their being). And humans are progressive actualized potentialities (they are changing beings). They are composed of form/matter. Angels are pure form (no matter). God is pure Act (no form or matter). Thus, humans can change in two ways: Substantially-by creation or annihilation–of God and accidentally– by taking on or losing accidental forms. But God cannot change at all since He has no potentiality needed for change, since change is passing from a state of potential for the change to a state where the change is actualized.

It is noteworthy here that Aristotle had no composition on the level of being (Form) and, hence, no real answer to Parmenides. Aristotle had forty-seven or fifty-five Pure Forms (Unmoved Movers) but there were no ways to distinguish them, there was no potency in them.

Aquinas' Arguments for the Existence of God

The Thomistic arguments for God were not original. Thomas' proofs for God are summarized on his work titled *Summa Theologiae*. In this, he demonstrates what he calls the "Five Ways" of proving God's existence through and based upon empirical observation. These are not original to Thomas but can be traced back to the philosophers of antiquity. Rather, Thomas transforms them and points the "ways" to God's existence; the God of

Christianity instead of the God of Aristotle or the Arabian philosophers. They had been used in various forms before him. The famous "five Ways" to prove God's existence are five different starting points. First, he argued from motion to an unmoved mover. Second, he reasoned from causality to an uncaused Cause. Third, he moves from contingency to a necessary Being. Fourth, He argues from degrees of perfection to a perfect Being. Fifth, he begins with purpose and reasons to a Designer. The fourth one is the most Platonic, and the fifth one is a Teleological argument rather than cosmological as the other four are.

Many Thomistic scholars agree that the basic argument beneath the first three or four arguments can be put like this: way to prove God's existence. (1) Things change (e.g., come to be or cease to be in some way). (2) but change is passing from potency to actuality. (3) And whatever changes is composed of potency and act. (4) But potency cannot actualize itself; only an actuality can actualize something. (5) Neither can another composed being actualize; it needs some actualizer to actualize it. (6) Therefore, every composed being is actualized by pure Act (God).

Aquinas' View of the Nature of God

One of the negative attributes of God is his lack of composition or elements. This is referred to as the divine simplicity of God. God is not composed of form and matter or substance and accident. God is identical to his essence, being unlike anything else. In addition, God's *esse* and his essence are identical. This leads Thomas to conclude that God is pure act. This was revealed to Moses when God identified himself as He Who Is (Exodus 3:14). This concept of God as pure act was anticipated by Avicenna, Maimonides, and William of Auvergne, and finds its fulfillment in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. God is pure Actuality with no potency. Everything God creates must have potentiality in it. God cannot make another pure act. The moment something comes to be, it could cease to be. In biblical language it says, "by him all things exist." God is not only the originating Cause of all beings, but He is also the conserving cause. Pure Act, God has aseity (self-existence). Also, God must be the one and only God since there cannot be two beings of pure Actuality. For two infinite Beings cannot differ in their beings since they are one and the same kind of being. Further, in order to have two one must differ in something, which means one has something the other does not have.

Therefore the one lacking is not infinite. The same applies to two perfect beings.

God is also simple (indivisible) because Pure Act can't have no potency to be divided. God is immutable for what has no potency cannot change. God must be eternal (non-temporal) for time is change from before to after. But Pure Act cannot change. Likewise, God is infinite, that is, He has no limits since only potency provides limits. In short, anything that implies potency in creation *cannot* apply to God (the way of negation). But, everything that implies actuality *must* apply to God because God as Pure Being cannot bring into being what does not have being.

The theology of Aquinas is dominated with his notion of God, the I AM of Exodus 3:14, the I AM Being. However, one can ask, What is Being? To Augustine, Being was eternal immutability. To Anselm, Being was whose nature it is to be. In Thomas' mind, the notion of "Being" carried with it the deepest meaning of the word "being" acted out in the verb "to be," not to be mistaken to mean "becoming." To Thomas, "to be" is something fixed and immutable. God is the being whose whole nature it is to be and to act, identified by saying that HE IS. According the Thomas, the essence of God is his *esse*. God's own *esse* is precisely that which God is. It can be known *that* God is, but we cannot with our finite minds comprehend *what* he is. Therefore, in this life, God can only be understood by man imperfectly through analogy, namely, we can know His attributes which are similar to the way God is—what God is in respect to what's in the universe as cause and effect. Therefore, His existence is not known directly but indirectly the way a cause is known by its effect.

Aquinas' View of Analogous Language about God

There are only three possibilities with respect to our language about God: Either it's (1) univocal, (2) equivocal, or (3) analogical. Equivocal means totally different and leads to self-defeating skepticism. For if everything we affirmed about God was totally different than the way He is, we could not know this without knowing the way He is. All negations presuppose some positive knowledge. We can't say not-that unless we know what "that" is.

Univocal means totally the same, but our knowledge of God cannot be totally the same since all we know, we know finitely. But God is and knows

things infinitely. Therefore, our knowledge about God cannot be entirely the same as His. John Duns Scotus argued convincingly from univocal concepts, but this is not contrary to Aquinas since his view allows that the terms applied to God and creatures be defined (apprehended—first act of the intellect) the same way. What Aquinas insisted is that these terms must be applied (predicated)—second act of the intellect—in a different way.

For whereas God and John are both good, God is infinitely good and John is only finitely good. So, the same term (univocally understood) must be applied to God in a similar (but different) way than it is applied to John who is only finitely good.

This leaves only one logical alternative. If our talk about God cannot be entirely different nor entirely the same, then it must be similar (analogous). This analogy is based in similarity between Creator and creature. God cannot *give* what He has not *got.* He can't *produce* what He doesn't *possess*. He can't share with others what He doesn't have to share. In what does the similarity between God and creatures exist. It can't be potency since God has none. So, it must be in actuality. Act communicates act, and Being produces being. So, God is unlike creatures in anything that implies potency (thus the need for the via negativa). And He is like them in their actuality.

Two Kinds of Analogy

There are two kinds of analogy: extrinsic and intrinsic. In extrinsic analogy only the effect has the characteristic; the cause merely causes that effect. For example, hot water makes an egg hard, but the cause does not have hardness. In intrinsic analogy, both the cause and the effect share the same characteristic (though each in accordance with the mode of its being). For example, hot water produces a hot egg. Heat communicates heat. For Aquinas, this is the problem in Plotinus where there is only an external analogy between the cause (the One) and its effect (Nous). So, God is producing mind but does not have Mind. For Aquinas, this is not possible since the Cause cannot give what it does not have to give. Only Mind can produce mind.

The Nature of Efficient Causality

When Aquinas speaks of a "cause" being similar to its effect, he means efficient cause, not an instrumental or material cause. For clearly an essay is

not like a pen (which is only an instrumental cause), but the essay is like the author's mind. Likewise, a mosquito is not like malaria since the mosquito is only an instrumental cause (that carries the malaria parasite). But malaria parasites (the efficient cause) are like malaria parasites the produce malaria parasites. So, an efficient cause is always analogous in some way to its effect.

Likewise, by "cause" Thomas does not mean material cause. For unlike an efficient cause (that by which something is produced), a material cause is not similar to the efficient cause. For example, sun rays harden clay, but are not like clay (the material cause). The similarity is only between the actuality in the effect and the actuality of the efficient cause that produced it.

Aquinas on Ethics

Just as all thought has first principles, so do human actions. The first principles of actions are called laws. According to Aquinas, there are four kinds of Law: (1) Eternal Laws which are God's principles for governing the universe; (2) Natural Law which are a rational creatures participating in eternal laws; (3) Human Law which are a particular application of natural law to local government; (4) Divine Law which is God's supernatural revelation in Scripture.

Virtues are divided into two categories: (1) Natural virtues such as prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. These are the typical Greek virtues intended for all people. (2) Supernatural virtues which are faith, hope, and love; these are not binding on unbelievers, but only believers. They are acquired only by God's grace.

St. Augustine (c. A.D. 400) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1300) form the bookends of the Middle Ages. While their basic theology was the same, they came at it from different perspective. Augustine was heavily influenced by the Platonic tradition, while Aquinas was more impacted by Aristotelian philosophy. One of the differences can be seen in the following contrasts:

Moral Wisdom: A Contrast

AUGUSTINE	AQUINAS

VIRTUE IS INFUSED	INFUSED AND AQUIRED
KNOWN BY REVELATION ONLY	KNOWN BY REVELATION AND REASON
SUPERNATURAL THEOLOGY ONLY	ALSO NATURAL THEOLOGY
KNOWN BY DIVINE ILLUMINATION	ALSO BY NATURAL LIGHT OF REASON
KNOWN SUBJECTIVELY	ALSO OBJECTIVELY
CHRISTIANS KNOWN BY DEEDS	CHRISTIAN ALSO KNOWN BY DOCTRINE
VIRTUE IS PERSONAL	VIRTUAL IS IMPERSONAL TOO
FAITH BEFORE KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGE BEFORE FAITH
BODY DRAGS US DOWN	BODY IS MEANS OF FULFILLMENT
PERSONAL (SELF) DIALECTIC METHOD	IMPERSONAL (LOGICAL) DIALECTIC METHOD
PRACTICAL AND SPECULATIVE WISDOM ARE INSEPARABLE	PRACTICAL AND SPECULATIVE WISDOM ARE SEPARABLE

The Will and Morality

The universe operates in ceaseless activity reflecting the pure act of the Being who created it. Creatures act simply because they are imitating their

creator. Thomas distinguishes three kinds of inclinations or appetites in man. First, man tends to fall forward due to the fact that he is a physical substantial form. Second, man has sense appetites generated towards the 'universal' good shunning things that are harmful. These would include the appetites of love, pleasure, and fear to name a few. Third, man has a rational appetite (a will) in conjunction with his power of reason. This 'universal' good is namely God and is reached for by man's intellect which is superior over his will. Consequently, Thomas places a high emphasis on man's intellectual life and ultimately in the knowledge of God reached by man's intellect. These free acts of man are issued from man as a result of his knowledge and will. Since the object of the will is good, and can only fundamentally be good, every act of man is generated to some good. However, the act may only be an apparent good. Only the real good is in line with reason; if only apparently good, then misaligned with and contrary to reason. When an act is contrary to reason, it is classified as evil. This is the basis of morality: acts according to or contrary to reason, acts either good or evil.

Conclusion

Aquinas was one of the greatest Christian minds of all time. His synthesis of the best in Aristotelian (and even some Platonic) thought is the greatest ever made. Nearly 800 years later, it still stands as a monument to the mind of Aquinas. It has a lasting legacy, not only in Catholic thought, but in Protestant thought as well. Much of the epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics has a lasting legacy to date. Even the Reformers adopted the classical view of God and reality proclaimed by Aquinas, positing a God who is simple, immutable, eternal, all-knowing, and beyond changing moods (impassible).

Reactions to Thomism

After the death of Aquinas, Thomism was attacked on two fronts. The Latin Averrorists would not accept Thomas' development of Aristotelianism. The conservative theologians thought that Thomism would provide too much ground for naturalism stemming from Aristotle and the Arabian commentators. They thought that these influences would be a detriment to the Catholic church because it seems to them that their doctrines would become paganized. In response, these religious leaders turned to Augustine's philosophical writings and used them in opposition to Thomas' teachings. As Thomas' works began to sell and be distributed, the adversaries of his doctrine

realized that the dissemination could not be stopped. As a remedy to this "evil," some of them wrote criticisms to Thomas' text. These were known as the *Correctives*. What arose from this counter measure was a new type of writing called the "Corrective." These works were written in order to correct Thomism. The most popular works of the these Correctives was done by Franciscan William de La Mare (d. c. A.D. 1285). La Mare, in his series of correctives, were by no means systematic in nature. His choice of subjects betrays a preference for the problems relating to the nature of angels and of the human soul. La Mare would present a doctrine of Thomas and correct it by following the precepts of Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure. (However, La Mare's works too were in turn corrected by a number of Dominicans, who, not understanding the writings to begin with, left the new position in mere confusion). Ironically enough, some of the supporters of Thomas would begin to correct these *correctives*.

The controversies over Thomas' work were primarily in three subjects: essence and existence, the oneness of substantial form, and the nature of divine illumination.

Essence and Existence:

The composition of form and matter dominates the natural philosophy of Aristotle. However, the composition of essence and existence is not Aristotelian. This was the obstacle that Thomism faced. Thomas stated that in God his essence and being are identical whereas everything created is composed of an essence and an act by which it exists. Material beings are made of matter and form. Giles of Rome (d. c. 1316), a member of the Hermits of St. Augustine, stated that essence and existence were two distinct things following from the fact of creation. If essence of a creature was exactly the same with its existence, it would exist through its essence and therefore would not need to be created. Giles pictured God as an infinite ocean of existence where through creation filled up finite vessels according to their respective capacities. (This he borrowed from Neo-Platonism.) Giles work was challenged by Henry of Ghent (d. c. 1293) and posited that if existence is a reality distinct from essence, it must either be a substance or an accident, both of which are impossible. If this would be the case, then it adds a relationship of dependence to God.

One of the main reasons why many scholastics either refused to accept Thomas's doctrine or were unable to understand it was because they were unable to comprehend and accept the compositions of form and matter and of substance and accident including Thomas' notion of act of being (*esse*) and its relationship to essence.

Oneness of Substantial Form:

The issue was, Can a man have more than one substantial form? Thomas states that man can have only one substantial form which, in the case of man, is his soul. Consequently, if it had more than one substantial form, then it has several essences and being, therefore, not being strictly one substance. The reaction against his teaching came from the schoolmen, though agreeing that man has an intellectual soul which is spiritual, they disagreed in that the soul was the only substantial form of the body giving it being. Some envisaged a distinct vegetative and sensitive soul informing the body prior to the coming of the intellectual soul in man. In other words, man has several substantial forms arranged in a hierarchy where the lower prepares the way for the higher. This promoting of multiple substances was made by Thomas' most bitter opponent, John Pecham. It can be seen that the controversy was battled on two philosophical fronts: Thomism's philosophy of the act of being and Neo-Platonic philosophy of form, especially known to the schoolmen through Ibn Gabirol. However, even after the condemnation in 1277 by the schoolmen against Thomas' teaching on form, it was not until 1914, when Pope Pius X lifted the censorship against the propositions of Thomas.

Divine Illumination

Thomas defended the efficacy of secondary cause in all domains. This was in opposition to the Augustinian idea of seminal principles and divine illumination. The issues come down to did God endow created things with sufficient power to do work or did he create them with a deficiency? Does the human will have the power to acquire natural virtues? Do they require divine grace? Lastly, can the human intellect acquire knowledge on its own or must it be assisted by a special divine illumination? All these questions boil down to this issue: the power of God is to be exalted by the subtracting from that of creatures (Augustinian followers) or, as Thomas saw it, God is honored by recognizing the perfections (innate God-given abilities) of his handiwork.

Roger Marston, English Franciscan, (d. c. 1303), rejected the Thomistic doctrine and held that it is true that God has created man with an intellect, however, by its own nature man's intellect does not enable him to know the truth requiring illumination by a higher intellect, God. His position places philosophy only as it relates to natural knowledge of objects and insists that its origin is divine illumination. However, Duns Scotus affirmed that man does not need a special influence of God in order to know truths in the natural realm.

All the criticisms notwithstanding, the basic epistemological foundationalism and metaphysical pluralism, featuring the classical attributes of God lives on in both Catholic and non-catholic circles. Indeed, this view of God forms the core of classical orthodoxy expressed in the ecumenical Creeds accepted by all branches of Christendom.

ROGER BACON (C. A.D. 1220 - 1292)



Background

Roger Bacon was an English Franciscan born in Ilchester, England possibly around 1214, or probably 1219. Even though the history of his studies is unclear, it is thought that Bacon began his studies in the arts either in Paris or at Oxford. Soon thereafter, He started his teaching career at Paris often commenting on the works of Aristotle. While in Paris he lectured on the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. While he was instructing in Paris, he was at the same time not an admirer of Paris theologians. He found fault with them in their wanderings into philosophy, their ignorance of languages and of the sciences. About the year 1247, Bacon returned to England to teach at Oxford. It is here where he came under the influence of Robert Grosseteste, of whom he most notably admired. Being influenced by Gosseteste, he turned to science. For about ten years Bacon studied the sciences in addition to his fascination with alchemy (the science of interpersonal chemistry) and astrology (the study of star divination). He also had an interest in pure and applied mathematics. As a result of his varied interests and studies, he wavered between his interests in science and magic, which was heavily influenced by the pseudo-Aristotelian work called *The Secret of Secrets*. He joined the Franciscans about 1257. While in the Franciscan order, he studied in the linguistic and scientific fields and composed his chief work, *Opus maius* (*Greater Work*), supplemented by the *Opus minas* (*Lesser Work*) and *Opus Tertium* (*Third Work*). These works appealed to the reformation of Christian learning. and finished his *Opus Majus* by 1267. Roger was condemned by Franciscan superiors in 1277 for dangerous novelties (on astronomy). It was

because of this interest and activity in "the magic arts" that Bacon was charged with necromancy. He was imprisoned until his death in A.D. 1292.

His Works

Like Albert the Great, Bacon intended to compose an encyclopedia of all sciences without adhering to the text of Aristotle. Roger Bacon's additional works include the following: After the death of Clement IV (c. 1268), Bacon pursued his scientific activity by writing *The General Mathematics* (*Communia mathematica)* and the *General Physics* (*Communia naturalium*) which seemed to have been written closer to the end of his life. He also wrote on mathematics and scientific subjects composed a Greek and Hebrew grammar, and a philosophical compendium. His last work titled *The Compendium of Theological Studies* (*Compendium studii theologiae*) was prior to his death around 1292.

His Philosophy

Bacon wrote long treatises, though not his most original work, on philosophical works focusing on his view on physics, psychology, metaphysics, and ethics. He generally followed Aristotle and Avicenna. Through the influence of Augustine, the works of the philosophers of Islam and Ibn Gabirol, Bacon's philosophy inherited a Neo-platonic form, which he attempted to harmonize with Aristotelianism. The influence of Ibn Gabirol, the promotion of every creature as a combination of matter and several substantial forms, is evident in Bacon's conception of creatures.

Beginning with Bacon's chief work titled *Opus Majus*, he goes on to say what the four prevalent errors in philosophy were in his time. These hindrances stood in the way of every man, no matter how wise, in their understanding of truth. Bacon lists these four errors as: (1) submission to unworthy authority, (2) influences of custom, (3) popular prejudices, (4) one who conceals his ignorance accompanied by outward displays of knowledge. Bacon was a reactionary. He rejected the scholasticism of Albert the Great, Aquinas, and Bonaventure. He called them "the boys of the two Orders" (Dominicans and Franciscans), most specifically Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. He called Richard Cornwall "the worst and most stupid [author]" (*Compendium Studii Theologiae*, p. 52). Bacon also claimed that Aristotle, considered one of the more "perfect philosophers," was ignorant of many

things and should be taken to task for his teaching on the eternity of the world. In addition, the followers of Aristotle, such as Avicenna and Averroes, were also said to make false statements in both philosophy and science. Bacon would say that if these great men fell into error, there would be an even a greater of an error of those who followed! He decries their uncritical reliance on human authority. He lamented their neglect of the Bible in favor of Lombard's *Sentences.* He believed that only the Bible contains perfect wisdom and understood philosophy to be subservient to Scripture.

He believed that philosophy in itself "leads to the blindness of hell." Good philosophy comes to us by divine illumination which is the Agent Intellect (God) in every man. God reveals the principles of good philosophy to us, but these must be complimented by experience. He attempted to return to Augustinianism and he was strongly influenced by Grosseteste scientific views. Bacon stressed the need to know Hebrew and Greek to read the Bible in the original. He bemoaned the poor translations of Aristotle from Greek to Arabic.

Bacon believed that God revealed the secrets of Nature to the Jews and that these secret teachings had been transmitted by way of the Chaldeans and Egyptians to Aristotle. These teachings he thought could be recovered given the necessary mental qualities. According to Bacon, all truth is contained in Scripture but in order to draw it out, one needs the cannon law and philosophy. Philosophy was revealed to men in the beginning; the patriarchs and the prophets received it from God, and not only the law of God, but all the disciplines that make up philosophy (*Opus majus*, II, p. 9). The pagan philosophers inherited their wisdom, from the Jewish prophets to the Greek philosophers. "Therefore philosophy is merely the unfolding of the divine wisdom by learning and art. Hence there is one perfect wisdom which is contained in the Scriptures, and was given to the Saints by God; to be unfolded, however, by philosophy as well as by cannon law" (*Opus majus*, II, p. 14).

No truth can be incompatible with Scripture because all truth belongs to Christ. Against Aquinas, Bacon believed that the agent intellect is something that is outside of a man divinely influencing him not as a part of his nature as was interpreted of Aristotle. This source of all knowledge is God, and He is the ultimate goal or final cause. Bacon considered the pagan philosophers as recipients of a revelation from God. Theology and philosophy

are just parts of the greater whole. The purpose of philosophy is to lead one to the doorway of divine truth, the Scriptures. The careful pursuit of philosophy is the ceaseless going after truth with a focus on what God has revealed in Scripture. Bacon encouraged that philosophy (human knowledge) be open with respect to revealed truths. The limitations of the philosopher should draw the conclusion that God reveals to man truths which are of the greatest importance.

Bacon intends to deal with these sciences in such a way so as to not waste his time on philosophical positions like those before him, such as Anaxagoras, Democritus, Empedocles, Melissus, or Parmenides. In their time it may have been appropriate, but according to Bacon, at his time, they sounded sterile and ridiculous.

Roger Bacon: The Critic

Not only did Bacon criticize some of the great philosophers of the past, he also saw the need for thorough reformation of both philosophy and theology. He thought that the Bible was neglected in favor of Lombard's *Sentences*. He states: "There is only one perfect wisdom, which is contained wholly in the Scriptures, and it is to be unfolded by canon law and philosophy" (*Opus Majus*, II, 1). Like St. Bonaventure, Bacon sees philosophy as simply a step toward this wisdom. Philosophy in and of itself can only lead to blindness and darkness. However, the Christians who philosophize can complete the philosophy of the pagans, as long as they stay within those topics common to both, and advance far beyond them, though in this activity they are not theologians. Like Scripture, Bacon thinks that philosophy comes to man as a divine revelation. God is the light of understanding and is man's Agent Intellect. It is through this inner illumination that man acquires science.

Roger Bacon: The Reformer

Bacon's plan for educational reformation is divided into several parts where he devotes each of these divisions as separate sections in his *Opuas Majus*. First, he stresses the need of studying the original languages, especially Greek and Hebrew. In doing so, the Bible can be read in the original language in order for the philosophical and scientific works in those languages to be correctly interpreted. Bacon insists that translations are never exact. Bacon has

a further reason for the emphasis of original language study and reading: the proper conversion of the unbelievers.

Second, is the absolute necessity for mathematics, which is the gate and key to understanding all other sciences and is the foundation for all knowledge, including the knowledge of Scripture.

Third, Bacon emphasizes the study of optics—the science of visual perception and that of light.

Experimental science—knowledge gained by experience—holds a central place in Bacon's realm of learning and he considers it the basis of all knowledge. Though reasoning is one way of acquiring knowledge, it is experience that satisfies the mind of the conclusions determined through reasoning. Experience comes in two kinds: the first is gained through the senses, human and philosophical, and the other is through interior divine illumination. In this area, Roger Bacon was the precursor of Francis Bacon (below) the founder of modern science.

His View of Physical Science

Bacon was way ahead of his time in the physical science. He stressed the importance of both mathematics and experimentation. He was strongly influences by Grossesteste in these areas.

The Importance of Mathematics

Bacon asserted that mathematics is the key to physical sciences. Even nature acts according to geometric laws. One can learn nothing of the things of this world, either celestial or terrestrial, unless he knows mathematics. Math is also necessary for the theologian to understand the numbers in the Bible and calculate the dates it contains. Math is important in optics ("the very beautiful science") for calculating the refraction of light in constructing lenses. The Arabian scientist Alhazen (c. A.D. 965—1038) was his main authority in this field. He stressed the importance of experience without which "nothing can be sufficiently known." There are only two ways of gaining knowledge: reason and experience. But the mind is not satisfied without experience.

The Need for Experience and Experimentation

According to Bacon, the experiment provides a twofold conclusion: internal and spiritual—whose highest degree leads one to the peak of the inner life and of mysticism, and external where one acquires it by means of the senses through experimental science. Experimental science (this particular concept seems to have originated with Roger Bacon) prevails over all the other kinds of knowledge by what he identifies as a triple prerogative. First, experimental science engenders a complete certitude beyond what reason can supply. Second, it can take up at the point where each of the other sciences end and demonstrate a conclusion that they could not attain by their own means. Third, it consists in the proper power which enables it to peer into the secrets of nature, to discover the past, the future and to produce so many marvelous effects that it will secure power to those who possess it. This is what the church should take into consideration, in order to be sparing of Christian blood in its struggle against the unbelievers.

Even mathematical truths (the most certain of all) are not satisfying without experience. There are two kinds of experience: Observation and illumination. Divine illumination that comes in seven stages beginning with illumination in the natural sciences and ending with supernatural rapture and ecstasies (mystical experience). Experience gained by sense perception (a) confirms the conclusion of reason and provides knowledge of nature. Peter Maricourt (c. 1269) was the most admired experimental scientists whom he called "the master of experiments." known for his work *On the Magnet* (which was the best up to the 17th cent). Bacon himself experimented on lenses (and even sent one to the Pope so he could also become a scientist) and the rainbow. Bacon made amazing predictions of scientific progress that included: (1) fast moving boats, (2) airplanes, (3) fast cars, (4) cranes, (5) pillarless bridges, and men walking on the bottom of the seas.

His View of Morality and Religion

The last part of *Opus maius*, Bacon deals with moral philosophy. Moral philosophy stands at a higher level compared to mathematics or empirical science. According to Bacon, all science should be directed toward moral philosophy. He was not an agnostic scientist but was rather a medieval Franciscan who was interested in empirical science. Like other English philosophers, Bacon saw practical, moral, and religious value is science. He believed that all knowledge should be subordinate to morality and religion. All speculative philosophy should have a "practical and spiritual aim." The

purpose of morally should be to guide human conduct. The undertaking of moral philosophy is threefold. It deals first with the duties to God (recognizing the nature of the universe and its dependence on God culminating in reverence and worship). Second, to one's neighbor (reflections on the propagation of species and the relationship of citizens to the state including reward, punishment, and law). Lastly, it deals with oneself (following Aristotle, discussions regarding moral virtues as it relates to sensual desires and the pursuit of truth). Religiously it should lead to man's salvation. Science should be the servant of theology. Theology is one perfect wisdom revealed by one God who founded one Church to bring mankind to one end (eternal life). Thus there should be one temporal society ("A Christian republic"). Science should provide the instruments by which Christians can ward off non-Christian attacks. Meanwhile, the study of languages can equip missionaries to convert non-Christians to the true faith under the head of one Pope (this was inspired by Augustine's *City of God*) into one totally Christian commonwealth. Included in his treatise on moral virtues, Bacon dwells on the topic of anger—its source, remedies, and the way it impedes the intellectual life. [Later, Dante proposed a separation of secular powers ruled by secular rulers and the religious domain ruled by the Pope. And the Renaissance proposed uniting the world by purely secular means and reason].

His View of Metaphysics

According to Bacon, Metaphysics is the study of being. Being is neither equivocal or univocal, but rather it is analogical because it belongs to all that is, not equally, but by priority or posteriority. Being can be considered in a variety of ways, such as a thing abstracted from other things (like abstracted mathematical things), as a notion abstracted from other notions (like logic), as a universality, neither restricted to singulars or to species, nor as abstracted from actual beings. This is the kind of being studied by the metaphysician. The metaphysician examines the notion of absolute being, as neither abstracted nor restricted by any determination, but as separated from the rest by its own perfection, namely, God. From this then, metaphysics receives the name of theology.

Bacon's metaphysics was generally Neo-Platonic with an attempt to reconcile it with Aristotle. Like Ibn Gabirol (Avicebron), humans are composed of matter and several substantial forms arranged hierarchically; form of mater, form of animality, to form of rationality. When universal form

is attached to universal matter, the result is universal. But when individual matter is attached to an individual form the result is an individual. There is no intrinsic cause of individuality. God alone is the cause of natural beings. He makes an individual an individual. The human mind is not the cause of a universal. God is the cause of universality for he creates forms that resemble each other.

His View of Human Beings

A human soul is an individual substance composed of spiritual matter and form. It resembles an angel in this regard, but is unlike an angel in that it has a natural aptitude to be the form of a body. The soul has many powers and potentials (that are not accidents of the soul as Aquinas held). They differ in nature from each other (e.g., the will is essentially different from the intellect, and the intellect from the senses. But they are all powers of the one substance of the soul. The soul has two avenues of knowledge. As form of the body, it draws knowledge from the external world (In this capacity it is called possible intellect). Even here the agent intellect is needed to illuminate images drawn from the senses, thus abstracting them from their material conditions (Bacon is here trying to unite Aristotle's idea of abstraction with Augustine's idea of illumination). As spiritual immortal substance, the soul turns inward and sees innate ideas which are traces of God's own ideas in itself. Like other Neo-Platonists, Bacon held that the Agent intellect is not one of the powers of the soul but God Himself. He said, "the active principle illuminating and influencing the possible intellect is a separate substance, namely God himself." Like many others, Bacon (wrongly) believed this was the view of Aristotle and Augustine.

The intellective soul of man is immediately created by God and is considered a truth of Christianity but is also a philosophical truth as well. An important consequence of this position is that, since the soul is created apart from the other powers animating the body, the intellectual soul is an individual substance composed of its own matter and of its own form; it is an individual in the full sense of the term. Intelligence is a natural aptitude united with a body. The soul is not a separate mover of its body; it is its mover inasmuch as it is its act. Since it is an individual substance, the intellectual soul is completely definable apart from the body.

Bacon holds that rational souls are composed of matter and form, like angels. The relation of the soul to its body in the doctrine of Bacon is as he states in *Opus tertium*: “Since the rational soul is the ultimate perfection of the human embryo, which is composite, this soul must need be composite, so that its form may perfect the form of the embryo, while its matter completes the matter of the embryo” (*Opus tertium*, III, 293). He asserts that “[t]he soul is one substance composed of several parts, like the body. These parts are different in essence, like those of the body; nevertheless, the whole which results from these parts is one by essence, and it is truly one, because, just as, in the body, there results a form of the whole uniting all the parts in its essential unity, so also, in the soul, there results from many parts a substantial nature in which these parts have an essential unity” (*Opus tertium*, III, 297).

JOHANNES (JOHN) DUNS SCOTUS (C. AD 1265/66 - 1308)



The Life of Scotus

Johannes Duns the Scot is considered one of the main Catholic thinkers of the late Middle Ages. He is called the "Subtle Doctor" because of his very sophisticated distinctions and arguments he made. He was influenced by Aristotelianism and Islamic thought, particularly that of Avicenna, and was in general influenced by the philosophical traditions of his day. Even though he and Thomas Aquinas both shared the Catholic faith, they did not always share the same philosophical views, especially the notion of being.

John Duns Scotus was probably born A.D. 1265/1266 at Duns at Maxton in Berkshire, Scotland, though the exact place of his birth is unknown. Very little is known about Scotus, his life and his career. Duns was sent to the convent if Dumfries in 1277, to later join the Franciscan order in 1281. Prior to 1290, he studied at Oxford and was ordained a priest at Northampton in 1291. He later studied at Paris from 1293 to 1296. Returning to Oxford, he began to teach theology from 1297 to 1301. His training may have included Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris. Scotus was a younger contemporary of Aquinas. Like Bonaventure, he was a ordained Franciscan priest. He taught in Paris after A.D. 1302. He was known as the "Subtle Doctor" because of the fine distinctions and elaborate arguments he construed. In 1303 he was banished from France, along with many others, for taking sides with the Holy See against Philip the Fair. Returning back to Paris in 1305, he received his Doctorate in theology after which he was sent to Cologne to later die in 1308 at the age of forty-two. Aquinas believed the immaculate conception of Mary was a contradiction, but Scotus defended it,

claiming she was saved from inheriting Adam's sin by prevention through an immaculate conception (see Lk. 1:46), not by cure (as the rest of Adam's race can be).

His Writings

His writings are also difficult to retrieve especially his commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at Cambridge and at Oxford. However, Scotus is most known for his work titled *Opus Oxoniense*, which came out of his lectures teaching at Oxford, continued in Paris and identified also as the *Ordinatio*. Scotus also produced works by the titles of *Quaestiones quodlibetales, Quaestiones subtilissimae in metaphysicam,* the *Collationes*, and logical works based on Pophyry's *Isagoge* and Aritotle's *Catewgories, On Interpretation*, and *Sophistical Refutations*. He also did a little work on the First Cause, *Tractatus de primo principio*. The work titled *Theoremata* is disputed as far as its authenticity. It may seem that the writings of Scotus are works-in-progress rather than completed works.

In the work titled *Opus Oxoniens* Scotus defends the necessity of revelation against the presuppositions of the rationalist philosopher. These rationalists claim that man is perfect and can know everything by reason alone. This thought, stemming from the teachings of Aristotle, Avicenna, and Averroes, was making inroads into Christianity according to Scotus. This purely rational philosophy promoted the idea that man was naturally endowed with powers so much so that they thought that this reasonably included that all beings, including the Primary Being, God, could fall into the natural grasp of this power. As Aristotle says, "Nature is not lacking in what is necessary" (*De* Amina, III, 9) This was sufficient enough to undermine the Christian concept of life, the issue regarding the fall of man and the need for grace and revelation.

His Major Writings

Scotus wrote Commentaries on *Poprphryr's Isagoge; Aristotle's Categories,* and *Aristotle's On Interpretation.* English Translations of selections are are found in *Philosophical Writings of John Duns Scotus* (trans. Allan Wolter).

His View of Religious Language

Scotus affirms that man's intellect is able to grasp things as Aristotle states, but however, Scotus points out that in the present state the intellect is not in the full range of being but only that of sensible being. This limitation does not allow the enjoyment of spiritual intuition. The reason for ignorance, Scotus points out, is the effect of original sin, both upon Aristotle and on mankind in general. Therefore, philosophy is not capable of teaching the true object of the intellect. In the present, the intellect abstracts the notion of being from sense data. This is the focus of metaphysics. According to Scotus, he believed that metaphysics is the highest science since its object to God. God, as the infinite Being, is also the object of theology.

Scotus viewed universals as common nature or bond (see chart below). He insisted on univocal concepts. He believed that both equivocal or analogical concepts leave one in skepticism. Scotus argues that all "negative knowledge" knowledge of God is based upon some positive knowledge. These positives are concepts that are univocal—the same meaning when used of God and creatures—applied to God and creatures. Man's knowledge of God originates in creatures, but unless this knowledge is finalized in understanding what God is, man cannot truly know him in this life.

The Need for Univocal Concepts

For either we can identify the sameness in the analogical concept or we cannot. If we cannot, then we are left in skepticism. If we can identify the sameness in the analogical concept, then we have a univocal concept. So, analogous concepts either reduce to skepticism or to univocal concepts. Scotus held that all notions common to God and creature, including those terms used to express them, or which are proper to God alone, are transcendental concepts, ones that are held to specific categories, such as the term wise which is found both in man and God. According to Scotus, the divine attributes and pure perfections are transcendental because they are proper to God and common to God and creature.

To put it another way, either an analogous concept is one or two concepts. If it is two as Henry of Ghent (c. A.D. 1217?—1293, prominent figure at the Faculty of Theology in Paris during thirteenth century) claims, then it is equivocal. If it is one, then it must be univocal. Thus, analogous concepts either lead to equivocation or are reducible to univocal ones. Unlike Aquinas, Scotus believed that only univocal language evades the alternatives

of skepticism and meaninglessness. Being is predicated univocally of substance and accident, of God and creature. By univocal is meant ". . . by a univocal concept I mean one that is one in such a way that its unity suffices for contradiction when it is affirmed and denied or the same thing. It is sufficient as well for it to be a syllogistic middle term, such that the extremes united in the middle are one in such a way that the conclusion follows without the fallacy of equivocation" (*Oxon.*, 1, d. 3, ques. 2, n. 5). By univocal Scotus means that "which possesses sufficient unity in itself, so that to affirm and deny it of one and the same thing would be a contradiction. For "every intellect that is certain about one concept, but dubious about others has… another concept about which it is certain." Further, concepts used of God must be univocally understood because "no object will produce a simple and proper concept of itself and a simple and proper concept of another object, unless it contains this second object essentially or virtually. The key here is that Scotus wants to maintain that being has a meaning which is quite independent of substantial and accidental modes of being. Substance is not existence but is a mode of existing. The way which being is common to God and creatures differs from the way it is common to substance and accident. To say that God is wise is to speak of what he is. In creatures it is an effect that God produced in them, a sharing or imitation in something that God is, not in the sense that he shares in it, but in the sense that he is it. Also, our concept of God must be univocal, since "the proper concept of any subject provides sufficient ground for concluding to everything conceivable which necessarily inheres in that subject." Finally, "either some pure perfection has a common meaning as applied to God and creatures or not". In short, if there is no univocity in our concepts about God, then there is no certainty in our knowledge about God

The Conflict with Aquinas over Analogy

The conflict between Scotus and Aquinas at this point is reconcilable by noting that Scotus was right about the need for univocal concepts (definition) of terms. But Aquinas was is right about analogical predication (application) of them because he argued that nothing can be said univocally of God and other things. For God does not participate in anything; rather, all things participate in him. If there were a common univocal predication in which God participated, then this something would be more ultimate than God. Nothing is predicated of God and creatures as though they were in the same order, but rather, according to priority and posteriority.

The Need for the v*ia Negativa*

In order to talk about God, Scotus says one needs to know what is being discussed, i.e., some concept of God. This concept must be positively attributed to God and not purely negative. The only way this can be accomplished accordingly is by the concept of a being that is univocal that can serve to bridge the gap between the finite (creatures) and the infinite (being, God). At this point the need for the way of negation becomes apparent. As Plotinus correctly observed, God cannot possess perfections the way created things possess them. God is infinite and possesses are his attributes infinitely. Humans are finite and possess these same attributes (like, being, goodness, and truth) in a finite way. Hence, any attribute taken from creatures must be stripped of its finite implications (by the *via negativa*) before it is applied to God.

Scotus's Argument for God

Coinciding with Scotus'' concerns with the limitation of philosophy, he substantiates this by saying that Aristotle, though correct in positing the existence of God through his analysis of the Prime Mover, incorrectly made his conclusion. The proof from motion should rather be associated with physics instead of philosophy. Hence, the metaphysical proof of God's existence according to Scotus is *not* an *a priori* demonstration. Scotus posits that God's existence can be accomplished through only *a posteriori*, that is, starting from God's effects pointing back to the cause.

Scotus modified the cosmological argument of Aquinas by beginning with, not a produced being, but with the producibility of being, and also by amplifying the argument against an infinite regress of dependent causes. He reasoned that (1) Some being is produced (i.e., some beings come into being). (2) But what is produced is producible either by itself, by nothing, or by something else. (3) Now no being can produce itself (it would have to exist prior to its existence). (4) Neither can something be caused by nothing. (5) Therefore, being is producible only by some being that is productive (for only beings can produce beings). (6) And there cannot be an infinite regress of productive beings, because this is an essentially related series of causes, not an accidentally related one. And an infinite series of essentially related causes is impossible. Hence, there must be a first productive Cause of all producible beings. (7) Further, this first Cause of all producible beings must be one,

because it must be perfect in knowledge and there can't be two beings that know everything perfectly (for one would know itself more perfectly). And absolutely infinite cannot be excelled in perfection, since there cannot be a more perfect than the wholly Perfect. Further, there can't be two infinitely powerful beings for both would be the total Primary Cause of the same effect which is not possible. Further, there can't be two infinitely good beings since there can't be more than an infinite good. 8) Therefore, there is one and only one infinite Being who is the Cause of all other beings that come to be.

Since it was proved that God is the uncaused Cause, this points to God's power as unlimited. Moreover, the causal power of God points to his infinite number of intelligible objects showing that God's intellect must be infinite. Further, God's divine will must be also infinite because his love is unlimited.

Scotus's View of Human Beings

Scotus's doctrine of humans is as follows: they are composed of matter and have a soul, form is corporeal. Each of these elements has its own partial being (*esse*) and together form the composite person. Scotus says that philosophy can demonstrate that the human soul is the substantial form of a man—the nature of a rational animal—but it cannot prove that the soul has been separately created by God or that it is immaterial and immortal. This is an issue of faith.

Scotus does accept Aristotle's teaching on the division of the intellect, however, the roles are Scotus' own. The agent intellect makes reality universal by extracting it from the intelligible message taken from sense data. In the present, all knowledge is gained by abstraction. According to Scotus, there are two types of knowledge: intuitive, by which one knows something as actually existing; and abstractive, by which one knows something without regard for its existence (or non-existence). During the fourteenth century there was a hotly debated issue regarding intuitive knowledge without the existence of its object. Affirmation of this opened the door for skepticism making it impossible to be certain if perception of objects really exist.

In opposition to Henry the Ghent, Scotus states that special divine illumination is not required for the truth of natural knowledge. Specifically, Scotus outlines three areas in which certitude is possible without divine

assistance. First, principles are known to be true through the senses which can err. Our senses are not the causes but only the occasion of the knowledge of principles. Second, some general empirical facts can be understood with certainty based on regularity of experiences. These regularities lead to a natural conclusion. Third, no proof is necessary for the certainty of one's own acts. If the senses regularly perceive the same thing, with certitude one can be certain that it has indeed been perceived.

The intellect and the will have their own operation. The intellect knows the truth whereas the will loves the good. The will is the nobler faculty commanding the intellect. The will is autonomous and can account for its own act. The human will is different than the will of God. Divine will is not elevated above divine intellect. So, there is no voluntarism in Scotus' conception of God.

In regards to the moral law, according to Scotus there is a body of necessary truths that do not come under the controlling influence of divine will. In the natural moral order there are natural laws which are not arbitrary commands of God but are rooted in the very nature of things. Scotus considers the first three commands (of the Ten Commandments) so absolute in their binding force that not even God can abolished them. For example, man's obligation to worship God is strictly based on natural law. The other seven laws, pertaining to the relationship one has with his neighbor, cannot necessarily be deduced from the first principles of the moral order but are acts of good because God has willed to be such.

MEISTER (MASTER) JOHN ECKHART (C. A.D. 1260 - 1326)



His Background

Eckhart was born in Hochheim, Germany in A.D. 1260 while Aquinas, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, and Scotus were still living. He joined the Dominicans about 1260. He got his Master of Theology degree at Paris in 1302. He taught at Cologne where the archbishop accused him of heresy. Some twenty-eight of his propositions were condemned by Pope John XXII in 1329 (after Eckhart's death). Eckhart maintained his own orthodoxy. Some modern scholars agree. As we shall see, at a minimum Eckhart used pantheistic language to describe his beliefs which made him vulnerable to the charges of unorthodoxy.

Eckhart was influenced by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas and strongly by the Neo-Platonic tradition. He was a speculative thinker focusing on the relationship between God and the world, the God and the human, especially religious life and the approach of the soul to God. Though he was sincere and claimed to be orthodox, he did lay a strong emphasis on the mystical union with God more heavily than outward acts of piety.

His Writings Translated into English

Eckhart is known for making provocative statements, especially in his sermons. At the end of his life, he came under the suspicion of heresy, which led to an inquiry in 1326 by the archbishop of Cologne. Eckhart defended himself, though did admit to some exaggerated language but complained of misrepresentation. He further provided orthodox explanations for his

comments. After his death in 1329, Pope John XXII condemned twenty-eight suggestions picked from Elkhart's writings: seventeen as heretical, eleven "tasting of" heresy. F. Pfeiffer translated many sermons and tractates. R. Blakney, *Meister Eckhart* (contains his books: *Talks of Instructions, The Book of Divine Comfort, the Aristocrat, About Disinterest*, and *Sermons). Questions on Being*, 1313-1314. *Parisian Questions* (1302—1303), *Opus Tripartitum*. The twenty-eight condemnations and his reply are translated by J. Clark and R. Blakney respectively.

Eckhart's Philosophy

Eckhart was Neo-Platonic in his philosophical orientation. This is manifest both in his view of God and in his view of human beings. We begin with his view of God.

His View of God

Eckhart's favorite and almost constant theme is God—the ultimate Being or reality. He claimed that "God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." He said creatures exist only within God. God is sometimes called "Being" (as in Ex. 3:14: "I am who I am"). Eckhart's interpretation is that this is not a revelation of the divine but rather is a concealment of it. God meant exactly to do this in his reply to Moses. But if God hid his name from the Jews, he deigned to reveal it to the Christians. Thus, he claimed that Parmenides is right in saying there is only one Being (which Christians know as God). But Eckhart also says God is superior to being since all being is created. God is more properly called Intelligence than Being (vs. Aquinas). For John said, "In the beginning was the Word", not Being. Jesus also said, "I am the Truth"—which is tied to Intelligence. God is called "darkness," "wilderness," and "desert" since union with him is a plunge into the unknown. Like Plotinus, "unity" is especially applicable to God. God is "motionless unity and balanced stillness" and the "source of all emanations." Eckhart refuses to call God Being in the proper sense of the term. God is the cause of being, not that he is being itself. With language like this, it is easy to see shy Eckhart's views were condemned by the Church.

Eckhart's works include the following. In the *Opus Tripartitum* (*Works in Three Parts*) Eckhart asserts, making comment on the passage in Exodus,

that the essence of God and his existence are the same. While he speaks of God as Existence (*esse*), however, Eckhart makes a Neo-Platonic statement that God is higher or above being, and as cause of being, God transcends being. God is Intellect (or Understanding, *intelligere*). Though his statement is not strictly Platonic, Eckhart does appeal to the Gospel according to John to say that in the beginning was being. Eckhart uses *intelligere* with reference to God, and more specifically, to the Father of the Trinity. He attributes the intellectual act to the Son.

In locating God above being, Eckhart follows Neo-Platonic tradition as was already seen in Erigena. Both Erigena and Eckhart call God "super-being," "non-being," or "nothing." God is beyond all names that can be attributed to him.

On Human Beings

One of Eckhart's more notorious statements is that creatures are "pure" nothing. This may seem at first to be pantheism by saying that outside God there is nothing, meaning that in God is the one and only reality and that creatures are "part" of this reality. However, what Eckhart probably means is that creatures have no being of their own. If God were to turn away from them they would cease to exist. In addition, saying that God is infinite means that nothing can exist outside of God's infinity. Man is a composite of soul and body. The intellectual soul is its only substantial form. The soul contains the body as the superior contains the inferior. The soul has two aspects: the outer turned toward matter and the inner turned toward God. God is immediately present to the soul and gives it life. God is most intimately present in "the citadel of the soul" where the pure knowledge of God as He is in Himself abides. This experience is beyond all human concept and language and is obtainable only by supernatural illumination of God.

Eckhart expresses his views in the Neo-Platonic language of Plotinus, Dionysius, Erigena, and Proclus. Mystical union with God is described as the soul being released from the prison of the body and making its flight into the One. Since this language is derived from pantheistic views of God, one can see why Eckhart was charged with heresy.

When we speak of finite creatures as dependent on God, there is a natural tendency to think of God as a kind of additional being. Thus Eckhart

uses provocative aimed at shocking his hearers into a better understanding of the implications of their professed religious beliefs. He does this to drive them away from seeing themselves as a solid reality and God as a shadowy figure in the background. God must be seen as the one self-subsistent reality and creatures as nothing apart from him. This he does this out of concern for the relationship between the human soul and God. As the soul draws near to God, it falls further from the objects of sense-experience. As the thought (or intellect) of man retreats inward to the essence or "spark" of the soul, it grows towards understanding (*intelligere*). It is the likeness of God, who is himself *intelligere* and where this inward retreat into it that the Word can be born in the soul and in mystical union with God is achieved. This posits that there is in the soul something that is "uncreated" which is the intellect. Unless man ceases to be a creature he cannot live wholly in God.

Eckhart's Evidence for God

Since God is Being, we cannot deny His existence any more than our own, for basically they are the same. For existence belongs to the very essence of God. We know this by intimate (mystical) experience, not by rational argument. Contrary to his older Dominican brothers who had a more rational approach to God, Eckhart's approach was decidedly more mystical.

Eckhart bases his certainty of God's existence on the intimate experience of him and not so much on the complicated reasoning from the world or experience to God's existence, as Thomas Aquinas did. Eckhart's approach is more akin to St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure, who founded the evidence of God revealed by faith in the depth of the soul.

On His Condemnation as Heretical

Among the condemned doctrine of Eckhart, he proposes that God did not exist before the world, but rather the world was created by God at the generation of the eternal Son or Word. This gives the impression according to Eckhart that the world had existed from eternity. The creative act, as it is in God himself, must be eternal inasmuch as it is identical with God's divine essence. In addition, the archetypal ideas or essences in the Word must also be eternal. Eckhart claimed that he was following his predecessors, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

Eckhart's language lends easily to the charge of "pantheism." And taken in the context of their Neo-Platonic proponents, these terms carried a pantheistic meaning. However, those who defend Eckhart's orthodoxy make this distinction: God can be viewed in two ways: (1) In Himself—in which sense God is ineffable and beyond being. (2) God can be viewed also in His causal relation to creatures. In this sense God contains all the perfections which he creates in creatures (including "being"). Using, the "courtesy rule" (that one should take the most favorable [consistent] interpretation) of an author, Eckhart could be viewed as not being pantheistic. Armand Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy* (p. 296) offers evidence from Eckhart's *Parisian Questions* supporting this view. Taken at face value, many of his statements are heretically pantheistic. Eckhart argued that these were not to be taken literally but figuratively.

When seeing Eckhart from this proper perspective, the rather shocking and daring assertions made by him, which led to the accusation of heresy, can be explained. In any event, Eckhart was a man of deep faith in the Catholic religion.

The Continuation of Eckhart's Legacy

One of Eckhart's disciples was John Tauler (c. b. ~1300). To Tauler, the choice came down to either scholasticism busied with books and a removal from reality or a mysticism that opened up for a man the living splendors of his soul and the God in whose image it has been made. It is no surprise why he and many followers after him chose the latter. This depth of the soul and retreat with God is so intimate that it can hardly be identified, since God himself is unnamable. This "spark" of the soul flies to summits where its place is beyond this world (Tauler, *Sermon* 64, 2).

Another disciple was Henry Suso (c. 1300) who wrote *Little Book of Truth, Little Book of Eternal Wisdom, Letters,* and autobiographical *Life of the Servant*. Henry came to the defense of Eckhart when he was being accused of heresy. He was not held under the spell of Neo-Platonism as his teacher but was more careful to harmonize his teaching with traditional Catholic formulae.

A third follower of Eckhart was John Ruysbroeck (c. 1293—1381). He too agreed that these encounters with God cannot be described. However, he attempted to account for the possibility by presenting this union as a

restoration of man to his “essential existence” in the divine thought. Based upon the eternal generation of the Word, “all creatures are born eternally before having been created in time. Thus God saw them and knew them in Himself, distinctly, according to the Ideas which are in Him . . .” (Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of Spiritual Nuptials*).

The mystics mentioned were heirs of the great spiritual masters of the Middle Ages, especially the likes of St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Bernard, and the Victorians. Even though they admired the schoolmen of the thirteenth century, they had little sympathy for the schoolmen of their own day. When they used philosophical ideas they tended towards the Fathers of the Church rather than from Aristotle. Gerard Groot (c. 1340—1384) considered philosophy to be the ruin of the university and a source of heresy in the Church. His ideal was to imitate the life of Christ. A good scholar was not supposed to study but above all read the sacred Scriptures, St. Augustine, and St. Bernard. These authors stressed moral formation rather than abstract speculation of physics and metaphysics. Groot later the foundation for the Brethren of the Common Life. This was an institution devoted to monastic life and the education of the youth having the coursework centered around the Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, and the languages needed to read the texts. After several centuries, Groot and his followers urged Christians to forsake the subtleties of dialectics and to return to the monastic ideals of the Age of the Fathers.

WILLIAM OF OCKHAM (C. A.D. 1285 - 1349)



Introduction

William of Ockham represents a new way of doing philosophy compared to the old way Duns Scotus was the bridge between these two methods. Ockham's new way is fundamentally characteristic of what is called nominalism. One of the achievements in the thirteenth century was the clear distinction between faith and reason, between theology and philosophy. This new way of the fourteenth century did not turn away from the Christian faith (theology), but the reasonableness of faith and the intelligibility of what was believed was called into question. Like Aquinas and Scotus before him, Ockham used philosophical doctrines to elaborate his own understanding of the Christian faith.

His Life

Ockham was born around the year A.D. 1285 near London in Surrey, England. There is no definite information regarding the early part of his life. He became a Franciscan, began his theological studies at Oxford in 1309/1310, lectured on the Bible from 1315 to 1317 and on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* from 1317 to 1319. He was an English Franciscan Friar, the younger contemporary of Scotus. Legend has it that he studied under Scotus.

In 1323, Chancellor of Oxford John Lutterell brought erroneous charges against Ockham which disallowed the awarding of his doctoral of theology teaching certificate. In 1324 Ockham was summoned to answer the charges brought against him. Based upon the substantial volume of debated

issues, Ockham's license was never awarded to him. While Ockham was at Avignon, he met Michael of Cesena who at this time was the General Minister of the Franciscan Order. Michael was also in trouble with the Pope. Ockham took sides with Michael against Pope John XXII regarding the question of the temporal power of the church. Both men escaped Avignon around the end of May in 1328 and went to Pisa where they found protection under Emperor Louis of Bavaria who was also opposing the Pope on the same issue. In 1320, Ockham wrote a series of political treatises defending the rights of the princes. He wrote numerous works on logic, epistemology, and metaphysics including : *Selected Quodlibets* (edited by McKeon); *Selections* (edited by Boehner), and *Ockham's Philosophical Writings* (London, 1957).

His Writings

His main work is his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences* called the *Ordinatio*. There is also the work titled *Quodlibeta* including some other small treatises on the Eucharist and the divine knowledge of future contingent events. In the area of logic, he wrote an explanation on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, expositions of Aristotle's work on the categories and his work entitled *On Interpretation*. The main source for the philosophical doctrines are his writings on logic. Ockham also wrote *Summary of the Whole Logic* (*Summa totius logicae*). In the area of physics he wrote a commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, besides *Questions* on this work and a summary of it. In the area of politics, he wrote *The Work of Ninety Days* and *Dialogue*.

Ockham's Theology and Philosophy

Aquinas sought to defend theology's scientific character and to illustrate how theology was indeed the noblest of all the sciences. Ockham though did not grant this status to theology in the proper use of the term science. He argued that theology rested upon faith and authority rather than on evidence. Science according to Ockham was evidence from experience or from principles or from conclusions drawn from these evidential principles. Faith in the divine is not knowledge or science because it lacks evidence. In addition, though Aquinas considered the scope of theology unlimited because it enables all truth, meaning that all philosophical and scientific truths can enter into the arena of theology, Ockham denied this because if this were the case all sciences would lose their independence. Each science, according to Ockham, is a collection of related conventions drawing to related conclusions.

Theology is limited by its purpose—to lead man to eternal happiness through truths leading to salvation. But philosophy is a collection of related mental patterns of behavior. Metaphysics and logic are ordered groups of habits expressed in written propositions. This is why Ockham speaks of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as the science of metaphysics. Certain truths can be theological or metaphysical, or both, by having it incorporated into theology or metaphysics. (The theologian takes exception in the case of the Trinity and the Incarnation as not being metaphysical because these are only known through divine revelation.) Since there are truths about God that appear to be neutral, they can fall into both of these studies, such as the wisdom and goodness of God. This is why it cannot be said that in metaphysics there is one subject matter (as compared to the other sciences).

Ockham says that "Every science, whether it be real (i.e., those that are the sciences of reality) or rational, like logic, is concerned with propositions as with objects known, for only propositions are known" (*Sentences*, I, 2, 4, M. See *Physics* p. 11). Propositions associated with metaphysics are composed of terms existing outside the mind and the terms of logical propositions are concepts in the mind.

When considering theology and some subdivisions of philosophy as a collection of mental habits or of propositions arranged according to some principle, Ockham pioneered the conception of science as an ordered body of knowledge or a collection of propositions. Here is where he jettisoned the earlier notions coupled to science.

Ockham sees God as omnipotent and free to do whatever is not a logical contradiction but he also sees the world as contingent, meaning, finite things are contingent upon divine will. His siding with divine omnipotence and freedom causes him to reject any Greek or Islamic teachings on necessitarianism. The world existing from emanations or the idea of divine ideas as something to be copied is unthinkable. His ideas of divine omnipotence and freedom are matters of faith for Ockham and are an influence on him as a philosopher. Many believe that they were also influential in the rise of modern science which is based on the created order as a contingent reality revealing the Divine activity.

Ockham's View of God

Ockham did not side with Scotus' proof for the existence of God as a Being absolutely supreme and perfect, unique and infinite, the efficient and final cause of all things. Ockham did not think that human reason could demonstrate the existence of such a thing. Ockham thinks it is difficult to prove that this Being is external from the infinite series of things. How does one know that a man is not the cause of the total being of his son? Ockham finds a stronger argument in this Being being the (simultaneous) conserving cause rather than the producing or efficient cause. However, according to Ockham, this does not prove (to him) that there is only One Being because he considers the possibility of other worlds with other causes. Basically, human reason cannot prove the existence of only One God. The only way one can know the efficient cause is to work backwards from what is existing because this is simply based on sequence. And, just as there is no proof for God as efficient cause there is likewise no proof for God as the final cause.

Ockham's Epistemology: How We Know the World

According to Ockham, knowledge is divided into two kinds: incomplex and complex. Incomplex knowledge is the knowledge of terms and simple objects for what they are, for example, "Socrates," "man," "white." Complex knowledge is the knowledge of propositions formed from these terms or simple objects, for example, "Socrates is a white man." Further, abstract knowledge is broken down into two kinds: intuitive, the ability to judge whether the object exists or does not exist, and, abstract, which does not have evidence to enable a sound judgment to be made in determining if the object exists or does not.

The knowledge of the sensed world begins with perception—experimental knowledge—followed by intellectual intuition. (The exception to this—intellectual intuition following perception—is the example of our own acts of understanding and willing or of pleasure and sadness.) The object of abstraction is primarily that of universals. Thus, an individual can be known both abstractly as well as a universal. Here is where Ockham parts company with Scotus who posited the distinction between intuitive and abstract knowledge on their objects. Ockham suggests that that there can be an

intuition of non-existing things. This is used by later Skeptics (as David Hume) to deny that our senses inform us about reality.

It is by the intuitive knowledge that one can describe a contingent proposition about the existence of the thing that is fully understood. However, he is not about to conclude that just because this thing is apprehended in the mind guarantees its existence. There is the allowance that even though there is the vision of the object it could be possible that God has produced the stimulated mental recognition without the object really existing. Ockham brings God into the picture because in his view the perception of an object cannot be caused unless the object really exists and it is only God who can bring about such a situation. Here the philosopher sees that in this explanation there is not apparent contradiction. However, the critics opened the door to an exception—God could be a deceiver.

Ockham was a nominalist who rejecting any real status for essences (universals). He claimed that we cannot know the real world via our senses. For God could create ideas of the world in our minds. He was a radical empiricist because he held that we cannot be sure of the real world via our senses. Intuition is a better way of knowing.

Ockham's cardinal principle was that universals only exist in the mind; everything outside the mind is by the very fact that it is individual. Ockham lists the three primary positions on universals known to him. First, the Platonic, positing real distinction between the individual and its nature. Second, the argument of Duns Scotus, where he grants only a formal distinction between the individual and its nature. Third, the Thomistic, positing only a distinction of reason between the two. Ockham, after examining and dismissing the three popular positions, makes his presentation which is known as nominalism.

Ockham states that a universal is a *sign* of many things. Since there are two kinds of signs, conventional, like spoken and written words, which can vary from country to country, and natural, facts of nature that consequently do not change from country to country, thus, there are then only two kinds of universals. In itself, every sign is an individual thing, whether it is word or concept, and its universality signifies many things. Therefore, universality is associated with signification, itself not being a thing or its own reality. Hence

Ockham's principle of universals: every *thing* is individual necessitating that there are no universal things or realities.

Ockham's Razor

Literally, as stated by Ockham, this principle declares "Never multiply causes without necessity." That is, never introduce more than is required for an explanation. This principle has been polluted to the popular "The simplest explanation is the best." In view of his principle of economy or parsimony, Ockham asked: Why should the nature of "universal" things be waiting for some individuation? The observed world is full of individuals where the nature of it is not distinct from its individuating characteristics. The issue for Ockham is that he can proceed without making any consideration to the absolute nature. As described above, his "razor" is related to his idea of universals. Ockham's Razor is an example of his economy of thought- it is not original with him but was a common dictum of the scholastics traced back to Aristotle. It was Ockham's use of it that made it popular because of his empiricism and nominalism. His application of this principle was to eliminate representative likenesses as a means by which one can know reality. Objects in the mind do not need a phenomenal medium in order to know. All that is required to explain knowledge is an act of knowing and the individual reality of the object. The need for likenesses is superfluous to explain knowledge. (The proponents of likenesses argue that they are needed before the act of knowledge.) Going further, Ockham's economy of thought also eliminates the distinction between agent and possible intellects. According to him these intellects are identical in reality; they only differ in their connotation.

The popular misconception of Ockham's razor is "the fewer, the truer," and "the fewest, the truest." However, what he actually said was, "That is, do not posit any more causes to explain something than are necessary." This principle has been widely used (and misused) in modern philosophy and science.

Ockham's Ethics

Ockham was an ethical voluntarist in that he believed that something is good because God wills it. God does not will it because it is good (which is ethical essentialism). He rejected essentialism because there is nothing more ultimate outside God to which he must be subject (as the Good in Plato philosophy). He did not respond to views (like Aquinas) that held that the

Good is God so that God is not submitting to some Good beyond Himself but to the essential God of His own nature.

Ockham's ethic follows from his nominalistic view. Aquinas' morality was linked to man's final end, happiness, which was identical with the perfection of his being. His morality had a metaphysical foundation linking God with man and giving him a share in the divine goodness and perfection. Ockham, on the other hand, severed the bond between metaphysics and ethics and bases morality strictly upon man's obligation to follow the laws that were freely laid down by God and given to man. So, he believed that an action is good because God willed it; God did not will it because it is good.

Ockham does base morality, as his predecessors did, on the perfection of human nature nor upon the teleological relationship between God and man. Therefore, according to Ockham, goodness is not a property of being but rather signifies that something is as it ought to be. This notion of goodness is tied to the will: conformity with a will exterior to itself, namely God's will. It is meaningless then to speak of God as good (in relation to ethics) because there is no will external to him determining what he should or should not be. Instead, it should be known that God is a law unto himself—he is absolute master of himself and of his actions. Ockham would conclude then that goodness is not an essential property of God.

Since God is omnipotent and free, God is not bound to impose law on man. According to Ockham, God's laws imposed upon man are arbitrary: he can command men to love him or he can command men to hate him. The law of non-contradiction binds God only when he commands these two things at the same time to the same man. However, God could impose these seemingly contradictory orders on a man at different times or at two different places. God however legislates as he wills and lays down a consistent moral code that all men are obligated to freely follow. There is a natural morality and a natural law which all men can discover and are obligated to follow.

Ockham's Reservations about the Cosmological Argument

Ockham was a late Medieval skeptic. He not only raised doubts about whether we can trust our senses, but denied that an essentially related infinite series of causes was impossible. He argued that it is possible that essentially related causes (such as father begetting son) need not be simultaneous causes.

Ockham, as a Christian is concerned with upholding the omnipotence of God but is also, from the philosophical arena, preoccupied with the problem of evidence as the basis for agreement. He is attempts to blend together the possibility of the existence of non-existing things coupled to a God who is bound by the law of non-contradiction. And, if there arose a non-existing object of intuition, one would have to set as a prerequisite that this object must be perfect but however it would be based upon an act of belief rather than caused by true intuition. He anticipated the skeptic David Hume by claiming that a cause is "that whose existence or presence is followed by something." This claims that there is no basis in experience for making a necessary connection between cause and effect.

Ockham also claimed that one could not prove that there was only one God in the absolute sense of the word. Only if God is taken to mean the "most perfect" Being that actually exists can it be said that the unity of God has been proven. If, however, as Christian theist insist, the unity of God refers to the "most perfect" Being possible, then the unity of God cannot be proven in this sense, because the proposition "God exists" is not a self-evident proposition (since many doubt it and a self-evident proposition cannot be doubted), nor is the absolute unity of God known through other propositions that can also be doubted, nor is it known by experience, for experience can provide one only with the actual, not with the possible. Therefore there is no way to demonstrate that God is absolutely one.

The only way one can argue for the efficient cause proposition is that the latter follows upon the existence of the former—the efficient cause. According to Ockham, "An efficient cause is defined as that whose existence or presence is followed by something" (*Quodlibet*, IV, 1). This relationship is simple based upon sequence and experience. One can only experience the effects upon the world, not God's (direct) effects. In addition, since there is no adequate proof for the efficient cause of the universe there is likewise no proof for its final cause either. The term "final cause" means that God ordains and wills creatures to a certain end. However, neither experience nor any proposition convinces that the heavenly Intelligences act in such a way towards an end intended by God. Ockham uses similar logic to demonstrate that the existence of the soul in man has not been created by an efficient cause.

Ockham's Influences on Others

The God that Ockham believes in is Yahweh, who obeys nothing, not even the Platonic Ideas. Ockham is safe in his belief about God even though he does not *know* what he believes, nor does he need to know it. It is enough that probability stands on the side of faith and of revelation. Ockham sought to nullify the classical scholasticism of the thirteenth century. Because of this, the golden age of scholasticism drew to an end and therefore there arose a turning point in the history of philosophy and theology. This paved the way for positivistic theology of the moderns and paved the way for modern empiricism in philosophy.

Modern skepticism finds its roots in William of Ockham. This includes the radical empiricism and skepticism of David Hume as well as modern nominalism which denies all universals and essences. Ockham helped cut ties with Greek essentialism. He helped the later rejection of Ptolomaic astronomy since the Copernican explanation is a simplier explanation via the Principle of parsimony). Modern situationism of Joseph Fletcher is rooted in Ockham's denial of universal ethical principles. Also, the idealism of Bishop Berkeley (that only Minds and ideas exist) finds roots in Ockham's view that God could create ideas of a world in our mind without there being a world out there. Likewise, Martin Luther's anti-transubstantiation view employed Ockham's view. Also, John Calvin's view of God's sovereign will is aided by Ockham's voluntarism.

Indeed, some trace a significant factor in the rise of modern science to Ockham's voluntarism. For by claiming that creation was based in the free will of God, the tie was cut with Greek essentialism, thus giving rise to a world which operated in accordance with laws set up by a Creator who could be understood by the natural laws He created. For unlike the Greeks, early modern scientists rejected the belief nature is necessary and its forms of intelligibility are eternal. For them, following Ockham, nature is contingent and its elements depending on the voluntary activity of God. Hence science must depend on the evidence of the senses. This constituted the empirical nature of science, namely, that only an order voluntarily created by God is the proper object of science (M. B. Foster, *Mind*, 1934). The following chart summarized this view:

GREEK VERSUS MODERN VIEW OF SCIENCE

GREEK SCIENCE	MODERN SCIENCE
NATURE IS NECESSARY	NATURE IS CONTINGENT
CREATION IS NECESSARY	CREATION IS VOLUNTARY
DEFINE ESSENCE (FORM)	DESCRIBE ACTIVITY (LAW)
DEDUCE PROPERTIES	RELATE ACTIVITIES
	CONTEMPLATION AND DEDUCTION
	OBSERVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION
EMPIRICAL USED FOR ILLUSTRATION	EMPIRICAL USED FOR EVIDENCE

Foster asks, "What is the source of the un-Greek elements which...constitute the modernity of modern philosophy? And . . . what is the source of those un-Greek elements in the modern theory of nature. . . .? The answer to the first question is: The Christian revelation, and the answer to the second: The Christian doctrine of creation" (*Mind* [1934], p. 448).

Some Medieval Philosophers on "BEING"

	Essence or Universal	Esse/Essence	Things	Notion	Predication
AQUINAS	Mental Being	Really Diff. Prin.	Similar	(Univocal)[1]	Analogical
SCOTUS	Bond[2] (Common Nature)	Formally Diff.[3]	Similar	Univocal	Univocal
OCKHAM	Concept	Grammatic Diff. (Noun/Verb)	Radically different	Univocal	Univocal
ROSCELIN	Mere Sign				
GILBERT OF PORREE	Real Thing				
HENRY OF GHENT				Analogical	

NICHOLAS OF CUSA (C. A.D. 1401 - 1464)



Introduction:

There was a breakdown in the Medieval period of the synthesis of philosophy and theology, or of Church and state. There were those like William of Ockham and other likeminded thinkers who were regarded as driving a wedge between philosophy and theology. Following him, Nicholas of Cusa is a forerunner of modern philosophy, being considered by many to be a Renaissance thinker.

Background and Books

Nicholas Kryfts or Krebs was born at Kues, on the Moselle river Germany in 1401 A.D. As a young boy, he was educated by the Brethren of the Common Life at Deeveter. (The Brethren of the Common Life, founded by Gerard Groot (1340—1384) where studies centered around Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and the languages needed to read the sacred texts.). He studied in Holland, Heidelberg, and Cologne. Later he met Master Eckhart at the University of Cologne. Eckhart's teaching on Christian Neo-Platonism left an indelible impression on Nicholas. (If one were to visit the libraries that house his collection of manuscripts, it would be evident that Neo-Platonism occupies a prominent place from writers such as Augustine, Proclus, Dionysius, Avicenna, and Eckhart.). He later studied law at Padua, then theology at Cologne and was for a time archdeacon at Liege. In 1437 he was an active member of the council at Basel to later occupy official positions in the Church. He was awarded cardinate in 1448 and given bishop of Brixen in

1450. He knew Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Latin. He mastered the sciences, philosophy, and theology of his day. He was ordained a priest in 1426 A.D. His attempt to get Hussites reconciled with Roman Church failed. Also, he did not succeed in getting the Eastern Church reconciled with Rome. He was made a Cardinal in 1450 A.D. He died in August 11, 1464. Nicolas wrote *The Vision of God* trans. by E.G. Slater; *On Learned Ignorance* trans. by G. Heron. His works have been translated by others as well.

His Works:

Cusa's works are a blend of theology and philosophy synthesizing them to the needs of his time. The dominating view of Nicholas is the idea of infinity in the sense of an infinite fullness of a positive being. Anselm introduced a being "of which no greater can be conceived," Henry of Ghent stressed the positive nature of infinity, Duns Scotus posited the "infinite being" concept, now became the metaphysics of Nicolas of Cusa. His most important work was called *On Catholic Unity* (1433—1434) representing his ideas of church reform. His philosophical work included the well-known *On Learned Ignorance* (1440), *On the Hidden God* (1444), *The Books of the Idiot* (1450), and *On the Pursuit of Wisdom* (1463). He wrote works on mathematical subjects like *On Geometrical Transformations* (1450) and *On Mathematical Perfection* (1458).

His Epistemology

It was a rejection of Aristotelianism in favor of Neoplatonism. It rejected the law of non-contradiction in favor of the unity of opposites. In the beginning of *On Learned Ignorance*, he states that God has implanted in man the desire to know. However, man's judgments can only approximate the truth and never be able to come to full comprehension. Once one has come to realize how much they do not know, that is when they have acquired what Nicholas calls "learned ignorance." When the object of knowledge is the infinite it is then that man understands how inadequate his human knowledge is. We can never comprehend but only approximate the truth the way a polygon approximates (but never attains) a circle. This is true both of our knowledge of God and the universe. In regards to truth, rational inquiry also fails to lead to the infinite because, according to Nicholas, truth as well is absolute like the infinite. Thus, this is the case when it comes to "finitely" knowing God based upon our limited knowledge and reasoning of the infinite,

the absolute. Reason's primary principle is the law of non-contradiction. When applied to God, it allows the affirmation and denial of certain attributes even though it does not allow one to grasp all the perfections of God. There needs to be a higher power than reason, which is intellect. Intellect has the power of insight as compared to reasoning that uses comparison and relation, first affirming then denying. (This "affirmative" and "negative" doctrine was seen in Dionysius and Scotus Erigena.) Nicholas asserts the importance of the "negative way." (The problem with this "negative way" of describing God is that it first requires some positive knowledge of him.) This negative way is fed by the similarities and dissimilarities found in creature when attempting to understand God's being and transcendence. The more one comes to understand God the more he transcends man's understanding of him. Therefore, it is not by discursive reasoning which grasps the truth but rather it is by the intellect and the "coincidence of opposites" that man can understand. Though Nicholas believes that reason, in the sense of understanding, cannot grasp the divine Absolute he will not maintain that the intellect with dialectic logic can penetrate the essence of God. The intellect can attain the most perfect knowledge of God through "copulative" theology, apprehending God as transcending all perfections. Since our knowledge is partial we can only "conjecture" (approximate) about God and the world. Since we are finite, we gain knowledge only piecemeal and can never equal the truth at which we aim. Thus, our best posture is one of learned ignorance. There is no analogy between creature and Creator (the Infinite is always infinitely beyond the finite. We must ascend from discursive reason (as in Aristotle) to intellect which mystically intuits a "coincident of opposites." Cusa seems unaware of the self-defeating claim that "All truth is perspectival" since that very claim is offered as the non-perspectival truth on the matter.

Nicholas was aware that his contemporaries would oppose what this seemingly philosophical contradictory, the "coincidence of opposites", teaching he was promoting. However, what he was promoting was a contradiction as a proper way towards truth. He realized the philosopher was not in a quest for a long lasting sovereign concept but rather was to overwhelm all conceptual distinction in the unity of a "mysterious" intuition.

His View of God

Nicholas' God is a being which nothing greater can *exist*. His description of God in terms of the maximum is similar to Anselm's God which

is a "being which none greater can be *conceived*". Second, Nicholas' God is identified with the infinite containing a positive fullness of being as compared to the Platonic view of God's infinity as a negative concept, signifying the absence of limitation. God is the coincidence of opposites. God is the absolute maximum and the universe is the relative maximum. Christ, as God and man, is the perfect union between the two. God is also the absolute unity for unity is identical to being. As infinite Being, God is the All, and as such nothing can oppose it (for there is nothing beyond an infinite Being). God's infinity, unlike Greek Neo-Platonism, is not a negative term signifying the absence of limitations. He is the positive fullness, the maximum of all perfections. More or less apply only to the finite, not to infinite Being. God is both the maximum and the minimum. In Him the two are identical. Nicholas warns that this concept of "maximum" may lead one to think in terms of more of less but rather it should be thought of in terms of an infinite and absolute being which excludes degrees. Here the absolute maximum is everything so that nothing stands in opposition to it. He illustrates this from math where an infinite circle is a straight line. So, the maximum of straightness is equal to the minimum of a curve.

It can be seen that Nicholas' proofs demonstrating the existence of God does not start with sense data drawing to the conclusion that God must exist but rather he starts with the intellect and illustrates that God's existence is intelligible concluding that the finite has no meaning without the infinite and that relativity has no meaning unless there is an absolute. The risk of Nicholas' new teaching was that it aroused accusations of him promoting what is called toady as pantheism. However, Nicholas did not promote that the finite can be the infinite; to participate in the infinite is to be finite. If the finite did not share in some way with the infinite it would not be anything at all.

His Proofs for God

Nicholas' speculative philosophy is a synthesis of opposites—finite beings have distinctions and oppositions. In human beings, for example, existence and essence is distinct whereas in God they coincide. However, for Nicholas, the principle of oppositions and distinctions of creatures coincide in God. He is not stating though that this understanding of creatures achieves an adequate understanding of God.

Cusa offers several arguments for the existence of God. God alone is infinite and it is he alone that contains all things. The universe contains everything in a relative maximum that is finite and limited. First, there is the proof from limitation. It begins with affirming that what is finite is limited, having a beginning and end. But what is limited must be caused by what is not limited. And there cannot be an infinite regress of actual finite beings. Hence, an infinite Being must exist (the finite is inconceivable without the infinite). The universe is also infinite in respect to time. Prior to creation, there was no time. Nicholas adopts the Platonic view that time is an image of eternity since time proceeded from eternity and therefore consequently participates in it. Second, there is the argument from absolute truth about the absolute Maximum (God). He reasons that either the truth about the absolute Maximum is or is not the absolute truth. Or else, it is and is not the absolute truth. Or, it neither is nor is not the absolute truth. But no matter which of these one takes, there is an absolute truth about the absolute Maximum. Hence, it is absolutely true that there is an absolute Maximum (or, God).

His View about the Universe

God alone is infinite in the full sense because He alone contains all things. The universe is relatively infinite because it contains everything else except God. Time had a beginning but it is the image of eternity. God is invisible but is made visible through the universe. As Erigena said, the universe is a theophany or appearance of God. Borrowing a notion from Erigena, Nicholas says that God is invisible in himself, hidden in infinity, but is only visible through creation. A creature as such is nothing except insofar as it mirrors God. God is both the "enfolding" and "unfolding" of all things for all things exist in Him. God is both transcendent over his creatures and immanent in them. God is in everything and "everything is in everything else." Hence, there is a basic unity in all things that is God Himself. The universe is the maximum contraction of the infinite because he contains all things. Individual things in turn are lesser contractions of the universe.

God is in all things by means of universe, and all things are in God through by means of the universe. The universe itself is a universal (Realism). It is the universal Form containing all lower forms. However, he agrees with Aristotle that universals have no actual existence apart from individual things. Nonetheless, universals (natures) do have a reality. We observe opposition in the universe, but it is relative and not absolute. They are reconciled in God,

“the coincidence of opposites.” To create all things is for God to be in all things. Creatures participate in God, not taking a “part” of him but by imitating as images reflect an object in a mirror. Creatures are images of God. Time is an ordered present: the past has been the present, now is the present, and the future shall be the present. Creation is the unfolding of God. With this type of universe, it can be seen that “everything is in everything.” The whole universe is in everything in a contracted way where, as Nicholas puts it, existing things “contracts” within themselves the universe. Not only can it be said that “everything is in everything” but Nicholas adds, “and inversely.” This might lend itself to concluding that if God is everything then he must be matter. Nicholas avoids this by saying that strictly speaking, absolute matter does not exist. This absolute matter is absolute possibility, which is God, but not through privation of form, but rather God is infinite possibility because all things are himself act.

His Contribution to Modern Science

Modern science involved an overthrow of Aristotelian Science. Cusa contributed to this overthrow in several ways. Since there is nothing outside the universe to limit it, it has no circumference. With no circumference, the universe has no center. Hence, the earth has no privileged place. It is not the center or resting place (foreshadowing Copernicus). The reason the earth does not appear to move is that motion and place are not absolute but relative to the observer (foreshadowing Einstein).

His View of Humans

Man is the unique microcosm of the universe, being positioned as a link between angels (the spirit world) and material things. Man is the world in miniature, the maximum perfection of the material world and the minimum perfection of the spiritual world. So, the universe is most perfectly mirrored in man. Man as the image of God unites within himself opposite perfections such as spirituality and materiality. As such, human nature provides the locus of the perfect union of God and Man in the Person of Christ, “the absolute intermediary.” Cusa’s system shows the unity of all things and the reconciliation of opposites (made possible by rejecting Aristotle’s principle of non-contradiction).

FRANCIS SUAREZ (C. A.D. 1548 - 1617)



Background

Spanish scholastic philosopher and theologian, "Doctor Eximius" was born in Granada. His father was a wealthy lawyer. Francisco was one of eight, six went into religious life. In 1564, he applied for admission to the Jesuit order though he was admitted to a lower rank because he did so poorly of both of his exams, however, after intense studies he did become an outstanding student. Shortly after his admission to the order, he began to study philosophy. In 1571, he was appointed professor of philosophy at the Jesuit college in Segovia to later becoming ordained into the priesthood. From 1576 to 1580 he served at the University of Valladolid and was honored with the chair of theology at the Jesuit chair at Rome. After transferring to a similar chair at Alcala, he achieved a considerable reputation as a theologian. In 1593, he was selected by Philip II of Spain for an appointment as chair of theology at the University of Evora in Portugal. This is where he wrote *Disputationes Metaphsicae* (1597), the *Legibus as Deo Legislatore* (1612), the *Defensor Fidei* (1613), a refutation of the *Apologia* of King James I of England, and the *Varia Opuscula Theologica* (1599). In 1616, he retired from active teaching to then pass the following year.

Francis Suarez was the last of the great scholastic philosophers. He was born in 1548, only two years after Martin Luther died and while the Council of Trent (1545—1563) was still in session. He was a Jesuit priest. His *Disputationes Metaphysicae (Metaphysical Disputations)* (1597) was the first complete and systematic treatment of scholastic metaphysics. He purposed in this work, unique of its own, was to write a purely philosophical

treatise without making any appeal to revelation. Though there were others in the past who made a minimal attempt at this, it would be Suarez' work that would be the first complete and systematic treatise in scholastic metaphysics. He also wrote *De Legibus et Legislatore Deo (On Law and the Law of God)* (1612).

Suarez was the main channel by which scholasticism came to be known by modern classical philosophers (like Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant). Immanuel Kant considered Christian Wolff's, *Ontologia*, the finest treatise in metaphysics, and Wolff said that Suarez was the metaphysician, "who among the scholastics pondered metaphysical realities with particular penetration." Kant also identified Suarez' teaching with that of St. Thomas himself (which is not true).

His Metaphysics and the Concept of Being

Suarez takes the traditional scholastic notion of being as being *qua* being. A "conceptual" being is understood metaphysically in an indirect way and by analogy with the "real" being (being *qua* being). Metaphysics studies the "real" being as a material being as well as an immaterial being: the former used to arrive at the latter. Suarez, like Aquinas and Scotus, held that Being is one formal concept which is applied analogously to God and creatures. He distinguishes two meanings of the word "being." In the first sense "being" is something actually existing or possessing a real act of existing (a participle)—an actual being. In the second sense "being" is something with a real essence —an object of thought that is not a pure construction of the mind (a noun)—possible being. But for Aquinas (vs. Suarez) an essence has no being, although it can exist in the mind as a universal or in reality as an individual. Suarez also rejected the Thomistic view of individuation by matter for individuation by both form and matter, namely numerical oneness.

Distinction of Essence and Existence

Like Aquinas, Suarez held that God's essence and existence are really the same, because it is his essence to exist. God has to exist necessarily in himself. Creatures are not necessary, so their essence and existence are not really the same. It is not of their essence to exist. This distinction safeguards the contingent and dependent character of creatures and marks them off from God. He maintained that there is a real distinction between essence and

existence in creatures because they are both real things. According to Suarez, a real essence is one that really exists. He stipulates what "real" is: it is something that can exist and actually exists in the real world. For creatures, their existence is not real at the time when they are only conceptions in the mind of God. It is when they are created that they are actually "real." Creatures can only exist by the will of God, therefore, they do not exist by their essence. Whereas in God, existence and essence are the same Aquinas disagreed, affirming the are not both beings but merely co-principles (namely, esse and essence) of each finite being. According to Thomas, there is a difference between essence and existence but not in the sense of two different entities. Rather, they are co-principles of finite being.

There were additional distinctions between essence and existence that Suarez dealt with. Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent reasoned that existence is merely a mode of essence because if they were distinct they would be separate. Suarez says that the nominalists held that essence and existence were only distinct in the mind. To combat these opinions and provide a solution, Suarez concludes that any essence that is created is formally and in and of itself actual and real. Such is the case then that the existence of a creature is not distinct from its essence. If there is a difference, it is only a reasoned one.

The Status of Universals

Suarez believed that all real being in the world is individual and singular. Siding with Scotus, Suarez maintained that the intellect has a direct knowledge of singulars. However, he rejected his doctrine of the univocity of being and agreed with Aquinas on the analogy of being insisting that there is only an analogy of attribution. The only kind of unity is numerical unity. There are no common natures but only individual beings. There are as many natures and essences in reality as there are individuals. Because individuals bear resemblances to each other, they offer a foundation for the universal concepts of the mind called "natures." According to Suarez, their only individual beings containing common natures and essences represented in reality. There is no universal; there is only the likeness between individuals. The nominalists are correct in teaching that things are not universal in themselves but only as they exist objectively in the mind. Between this objective concept and the individuals there is not a real distinction but only a distinction of reason. For Suarez, an essence is endowed with an essential being distinct from the existential being by which it actually exists. He insists

that universals exist at least potentially in reality and that our universal concepts are based upon natures existing in the real world.

The Suarezian doctrine is attempting to blend the notions of Aquinas—essence in itself has no being, Scotus—universal as an essential unity with potential reality outside the mind, and Ockham—many natures and essences in reality as there are individuals, at the same time arguing for his own perspective that parts company with his peers.

The Existence of God

Suarez offered an argument for the existence of God that was cosmological in form. According to Suarez, a metaphysical proof is required for the establishment of the existence of God rather than a physical proof. From this he argued that there must be an unproduced being since an infinite regress cannot be accounted for. From here, he reasoned that there exists only one God. The nature of this being follows the nature specified by Aquinas: perfect, wise, infinite, etc. He reasoned that: (1) Everything produced is produced by another. (2) But all beings in the universe cannot be produced. (3) And an infinite series of causes in impossible because either: the whole series is dependent on a cause beyond it (i.e. the First Cause) or else, it is dependent on a cause within the series (which would be self-cause which is impossible). (4) Therefore, there must be some unproduced or uncreated being. (5) Now this First Cause must be only one since the unity and harmony the universe points to one Cause. Further, there can only be one necessary Being (since each kind of existence is always individual by nature). (6) Consequently, there can be only one God.

However, it still must be proved that there is only one such uncreated being. The term God does not necessarily carry with it a one or more necessary being but rather it means "the most excellent being, who transcends all others and on whom all others depend as on their first cause; who accordingly must be worshipped and adorned as the highest power" (*Disputationes Metaphysicae*, 29, 2, 5, p. 35). In order to prove the existence of the Christian God, there must be a proof for his oneness. Suarez does this through an *a posteriori* method and an *a priori* method. First, the effects of God illustrated in the sensible evidence of order and governing of the universe brought about by this originator, and second, there must be only one God because if there were others they would share a common nature which would

mean they would have to exist outside of this necessary nature. Stated differently, if the nature of this one being was identical to its individuality, the nature could not belong to another individual. Since existence is always one, the essence must be with this one, the Christian God.

His Ethics

Following Aquinas, Suarez based all ethics in law. The central feature of law is obligation; and since obligation arises from the will of the legislator, law is essentially an act of the will. Suarez finds Aquinas' definition of law, "Law is a rule and measure of acts, whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting" (*De Legibus*, I, 1, 1,; vol. 5. p. 1. See *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 90,) as too broad and it does not distinguish between law and counsel. Hence, the correct notion of law must include obligation to the law. Suarez' definition of Law, "An act of a just and right will by which a superior wills to oblige his inferior to do this or that." Hence, the correct notion of law must include obligation to the law. According to Suarez, Aquinas' law is only an ordering, or a gauge of what must be done as a means to an end. Suarez opposes this doctrine by stating that the emphasis should be placed on the commands of the will—the legislator—not a directive of the intellect. However, he was not a voluntarist since law is grounded in the nature of rational beings. The primary law is the eternal law, by which God governs the universe. Divine providence extends to all creatures; the eternal law is that part of providence by which God governs intellectual creatures. Divine law is the direct revelation of God known as the Mosaic Law. The power and the will of God is the source of man's obligation to obey this divine law of God. Natural law is not arbitrary but is inserted in man's nature by God. God is the ultimate legislator of law, and in him it is the same as the eternal law. Natural law is based on the light of reason and is the work of the divine will where its ultimate source is God, the ultimate legislator. These precepts are immutable and there are no exemptions from the natural law. Some acts are intrinsically good or evil because they are in accord with, or contrary to the natures of things. The metaphysical principle of the immutability of natures in their essential being is thus the foundation for the objective goodness or evil of human acts. Consequently, Suarez' theory of law is in strict accord with his doctrine of universals and fundamental metaphysical principles.

Human law, represented best through political philosophy, must be based on either divine law or natural law. Following Aristotle, Suarez held that

man is a social animal. The legislative law exists for the good of the community. Suarez rejects the medieval imperial concept of political power in favor of a form of government chosen by the people favoring also the sovereignty of individual rulers. If dissatisfaction arose, he was in favor of the rebelling but tyranny was rejected. War was not intrinsically evil because just and defensive wars are permissible under certain conditions.

JOHN GERSON (C. A.D. 1363 - 1492)



Background and Writings

Jean De Gerson (Gerson-Ies-Barbey) (John Gerson)was born 1363 in Champagne, France. He was educated at the University of Paris and later became well known as a teacher of theology and as a preacher and was known as a French religious reformer and writer on mysticism. In 1395, he was elected as chancellor of the university. Gerson was brought up under the influences of nominalism, but was sympathetic to Thomism, which was to become popular again. His criticism against the nominalists was their employment of technical jargon which attempted to construct theories of the divine nature of God. Rather than treating theology strictly from a speculative perspective, he argued for the practice of contemplation. He is known for his writings *The Mountain of Contemplation* and *Mystical Theology*. These works were aimed at bringing practical religion back into the schools. However, his work on the mystical aspects of theology was not a study on mysticism itself but instead focused on the way of contemplation itself and the union with God through love, conforming the human will to the will of God.

Even though John Gerson is not, properly speaking, in the camp of philosophers of the Medieval period, he was a theologian, as was Dionysius, John Philoponus, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Johns Scotus Duns before him. Gerson was competent in philosophical matters. He had the ability to engage effectively in philosophical issues, especially when the maters of theology were at stake. Though many during fourteenth and fifteenth centuries claimed he was a nominalist, he never adhered to its position except certain realism doctrines, especially those espoused by Scotus Erigena and others.

Gerson dealt head-on with the problem of evil discussed and debated in his time, more so from the theological perspective rather than the philosophical. In his work *Fifty Propositions on the modes of signification* (1426), and later in *De Concordia metaphysicae cum logia* (1426), he describes the evil that needed a cure. This evil he witnessed was that the masters of grammar, the logicians, and the metaphysicians all thought they could solve the problems of theology utilizing their methods, but often disregarding the word of God as a mean to that end.

In *Against Vain Curiosity in Matters of Faith* (1402), he lays heavy criticism against the scholastics. He spoke against pride, fueled by vain curiosity and the desire to be different, envy, contentiousness, deceived by the philosophers and threatened to do likewise to the theologians. For natural knowledge and reason has its limits, but the light of revelation of Scriptures illustrating the innate wisdom of the God "whom no greater can be thought" is where true knowledge is to be found.

Gerson believed that the starting point of pride is when the theologian (or philosopher) succumbs to the idea that God is bound and does not act freely according to his will. At the heart of Gerson's criticism was the influence of radical Platonism on natural theology which confused the tenets associated with the Christian God. He mentions some of the heirs of Platonism, such as Avicenna, Algazel, Duns Scotus, Scotus Erigena. He believed the error was that the philosophers were reducing God to the rules of logical reasoning and discounting the free God of the Scriptures.

Gerson attempted to revitalize the spirit of Bonaventure. He believed that borrowing too much from pagan philosophers was dangerous for the theologian because it was contrary to penitence, humility, and faith. He looked at the climate of his day and saw that there were those who considered themselves theologians simply because they studied philosophy. These scholars despised the Church Fathers and neglected Augustine's warning that the language of theology was not free like the language of the philosophy. Rather, the language of theology had rules coupled with it. Much of this kind of thinking was carried forward by Luther a generation later (especially in *On Bondage of the Wil*l). However, John Calvin and the so-called Protestant scholastics (like Francis Turretin) carried forth much of the value of Medieval philosophy in the Reformation.

As Gilson noted, regarding Western culture (in *God and Philosophy*), it was the Greeks who were at the forefront. As history unfolded, it can be seen that there were glimpses of the nature of God coming out in these "naturalistic" ways of understanding the world. But the time of the Greeks drew to a close to now have philosophy cast its eyes upon a more modern era. What is to be expected from the new modern approach to philosophy? Is the being of God and his nature still under consideration?

During the time of the Middle Ages, most of the philosophers were monks, priests, or at least had some connection to the religious order. However, in modern times, philosophical thinking was located in the camp of the laymen. It would be Descartes (1596—1650) who would spearhead this effort in his *Discourse upon Method* where he stipulates "to seek no other knowledge that which [he] was able to find within [himself] or else in the great book of the world" (Gilson, *GAP*, p. 74-75). Not that he was attempting to totally discount theology and rid God of consideration, since the God of Descartes is the Christian God, but rather philosophical speculation should place theology (and God) in the background. Here he is promoting a division between faith and reason, unlike its union in Medieval times. To him, the existence of God was innate within the human mind. However, the God of Descartes was stillborn—reduced to a philosophical principle and "The Author of Nature" instead of the God Who Is. The God of Christianity had become an ineffective hybrid of religious faith and rational thought (Ibid, p. 89). The problem though can be stated in a nutshell: the lack of consideration of God in the study of philosophy and theology.

Others in the modern time will struggle with their concepts of God. Malebranche shows influence of Aquinas and Augustine but yet his conception of God involved an infinite world of intelligible laws. This of course resembles Plotinus' concept of supreme Intellect (Ibid., p. 93). Later, Spinoza, having neither the religion of the Christian or Jew, or any religious whatsoever, would state that a theistic God cannot exist because "the existence of substance *follows from its nature alone*, for that involves existence" (ref. *Spinoza's Ethics*, Part I, prop, 11, p. 8) (Ibid., 101), thus bringing pantheism into modern western philosophy. Later in the late 1600's there arose the

teachings of Deism, which, according to Jacques-Beninge Bossuet (1627—1704, French Bishop and Theologian), is “atheism in disguise” (Ibid., p. 104).

Immanuel Kant (a deist) and Auguste Comte (an atheist) dominated much of modern and contemporary thought regarding God. Their doctrines reduce the idea of knowledge to the scientific, especially in terms of mathematics. Since God is not the object of empirical knowledge, he cannot be known and natural theology is nothing more than idle talk (Ibid., p. 109). Their anti-metaphysical stance rendered a return to Aquinas’s “essence and existence” meaningless to many moderns. They forgot, however, the *why* nature exists is not a scientific problem because it is not susceptible to empirical protocol but rather it is a query of existential metaphysics (Ibid., p. 119-120). As Leibniz asks, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Though the scientist would claim that this question is meaningless, the meta-scientist states that it does indeed make sense and a First Cause in which both nature and history coincide; a philosophical God who can also be the God of true religion” (Ibid., p. 141).

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[1] Some say analogical

[2] Nature is neutral—it may be either universal (if mind generalizes it) or individual (if "thisness" concretizes is). (For Ockham, though, nature is individual; mind must generalize it).

[3] Formal difference isn't created by mind; mind submits to it. Halfway between mental and real distinction.

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